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THE HISTORY

RESTORATION

MONARCHY IN FRANCE.

BY

ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE.

Author of "THE HISTORY OF THE GIRONDISTS."

VOLUME II.



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CONTENTS OF VOLUME III.

BOOK TWENTY-EIGHTH.

PAGE

The 24th of June—Fouché is appointed President of the Provisional Government—Formation of the new Ministry—Fouché's policy—Mannet—Sitting of the Chamber of Representatives—It adopts Mannet's motion—The 25th of June—Departure of the Emperor from Paris—He goes to Malmaison—His farewell address to the Army—Five plenipotentiaries are sent to negotiate a peace—Interview between Fouché and M. de Vitrolles—Interview between Napoleon and Benjamin Constant—Advice of Napoleon's friends on the choice of his place of exile—He makes choice of America—He is watched by the Provisional Government—Temporary opposition of the Government to the departure of Napoleon—His residence at Malmaison—Solicitations of the Provisional Government to Napoleon—It delivers him a passport—Refusal of Napoleon—Proposition of Exelmans to Napoleon—Arrival of the *Allies* at Compeigne—Napoleon proposes to put himself at the head of the Army—Refusal of the Provisional Government—Meeting of M. de Flahaut and Davoust—Napoleon and Maret—Critical situation of Napoleon—His departure from Malmaison—His farewell—His journey—His halt at Rambouillet—His hopes—Overtures of Exelmans to Daumesnil—Napoleon proceeds through Chateaudun, Tours, and Poitiers—Mob at St. Maixent—He arrives at Niort—Arrival of the *Allies* at the People—He arrives at Rochefort on the 3rd of July—Napoleon renews his proposal to the Provisional Government—Various counsels as to the flight of Napoleon—His hesitation—Reply of the Provisional Government to his proposal—Napoleon embarks on board *La Borda* frigate on the 8th of July—He departs from Rochefort—His visit to the Isle of Aix—Interview between M. de Las Cases and Captain Maitland, on board the *Bellerophon*—The captain of the *Medusa* proposes to force a passage against the English cruiser—Refusal of Napoleon—He disembarks at the Isle of Aix—His indecision—He refuses the proposition of Captain Baudin—Some mid-shipmen offer to conduct him to America—Napoleon accepts the offer, and departs—He is kept back by his suite—Second interview of Las Cases, Rovigo, and Lallemand with Captain Maitland—Deliberation on his departure—Napoleon decides on going away by the *Bellerophon*—His letter to the Prince Regent of England—His instructions to Gourgaud—Departure of Gourgaud and Las Cases for England—Napoleon quits the Isle of Aix—His farewell to Becker—He embarks on board the *Bellerophon*—He receives a visit from Admiral Hotham—The *Bellerophon* arrives at Torbay—The Emperor is rejoined there by Gourgaud—Departure from Torbay and arrival at Plymouth—Cabinet Council of the English Ministers on the fate of Napoleon—He is declared a prisoner of war by the Allies—He is brought back to Torbay—He is required to deliver up his sword—His farewell—His grief on hearing of the Capitulation of Paris—He embarks on board the *Northumberland*—His Protest against England—His departure for St. Helena 1

BOOK TWENTY-NINTH.

Wellington after the Battle of Waterloo—His despatch to the Duke de Berry—His letter to Dumouriez—He enters France—His proclamation to the French people—He writes to the Duke de Felire and to M. de Talleyrand—Entrance of Louis XVIII. into France—Conferences of Haguenau—Wellington's reply to the French Plenipotentiaries—Dismissal of M. de Blacas—Louis XVIII. at Cateau-Cambrésis—His proclamation to the French—He arrives at Cambray—Second proclamation to the French—Intrigues of Fouché with the Provisional Government in favour of the Bourbons—Davoust appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army—Efforts of MM. de Vitrolles and Ouvrard amongst the Chiefs of the Army—The Provisional Government orders M. de Vitrolles to be arrested—His flight—Address of several generals to the Chamber of Representatives—Conference in the Chamber of Peers—Plenipotentiaries sent to Wellington and Blücher to negotiate an armistice—Conferences of the Plenipotentiaries with Wellington—Blücher crosses to the left bank of the Seine—Situation of France—Strength of the Army—Exelmans attacks and routs a corps of Prussian cavalry—Council of Government—Council of War at La Villette—It authorises Davoust to capitulate—Application of Davoust to Blücher—Blücher's reply—Fouché sends Colonel Macirone to Wellington, and General Tramelin to Blücher—Conferences at St. Cloud—Capitulation of Paris—Adoption of the Convention of St. Cloud by the Chamber of Representatives—Agitation of the people—Opposition of the Army—Entrance of the English and Prussians into Paris—The Chamber of Representatives—Vote of the Constitution—Interview between Wellington and Fouché at Neuilly—Presentation of Fouché to the King, Louis XVIII. by M. de Talleyrand—Conference—Nomination of Fouché to the Ministry of Police—Composition of the Ministry—Interview between Louis XVIII. and M. de Chateaubriand—Conference of the Provisional Government—Occupation of the Tuilleries, and expulsion of the Commission by Blücher—Dispersion of the Chamber of Peers—M. Decazes shuts up the Chamber of Representatives—Importance of Lafayette—Interview between Carnot and Fouché 49

BOOK THIRTIETH.

Review of the Hundred Days—Entrance of Louis XVIII. into Paris—Speech of M. de Chabrol—Answer of Louis XVIII.—Louis XVIII. at Paris—Acclamations of the populace—Political Position of the King—Attitude of Fouché—Ordinances for the re-organization of the Peerage, and for the Convocation of the Chamber of Deputies—The Army of the Loire—Orders of the Day of Marshal Davoust—Submission of the Army to Louis XVIII.—The Army adopts the White-flag—Blücher wishes to blow up the Bridge of Jena—Devastation of the Museum and the Libraries—Violence of the Prussians—Requisitions—Removal of the Effects—War Imposts—Occupation of Paris and France by the Allied Armies—Disbanding of the Army of the Loire—Marshal Davoust superseded by Marshal MacDonald—Diplomatic Negotiations at the residence of Lord Castlereagh—Ultimatum of the Allied Powers—Aversion of Louis XVIII. for M. de Talleyrand—Court of Louis XVIII.—His Family—Favour of M. Decazes—M. Decazes—His Portrait—Retrospect of his Life—His interview with the King—Fouché's Report—Proscriptions—Weakness of the King 90

BOOK THIRTY-FIRST.

Murat—His flight from Naples—Arrival at the Isle of Ischia—His aide-de-camp, the Duke of Rocca Romana—His departure for France—He lands at Cannes—Offers his services to the Emperor—Refusal of Napoleon—Terror in the South—Murat quits the neighbourhood of

CONTENTS,

	PAGE
Toulon and conceals himself—Asks an asylum from Louis XVIII.—It is granted to him in Austria—Attempts at flight—He fails—Adventures—His retreat—Dangers—He embarks for Corsica—Perils of the passage—Incidents—He is picked up at sea—His arrival in Corsica—He retires to the mountains—Political situation of Corsica—Murat is summoned to surrender by the governor of the island—His refusal—The governor sends a body of soldiers to arrest him—Their failure—Projects of Murat—He departs on an expedition to Naples—His march towards Ajaccio—Entry into the City—Arrival of Madrone—He sends him the passport for Austria—Murat's letter—His departure for Naples—Passage—Desertion of one of his vessels—Incidents—He disembarks at the port of Pizzo—Endeavours to raise the population—His arrest—Last moments—Condemnation—Death—Review of his life	150

BOOK THIRTY-SECOND.

Character of the French nation—Causes of the spirit of the elections of 1815—Fall of Fouché—His exile in Germany—Review of his life—Fall of M. de Talleyrand—Formation of M. de Richelieu's ministry—Retrospective glance at M. de Richelieu—His life in Russia—His character—Negotiations with the Allies—Their exactions—Treaty of the 20th of November—Letter of M. de Richelieu—Treaty of the Holy Alliance—Opening of the Chambers—The King's speech—M. Lainé, President of the Chamber of Deputies—His speech—Addresses of the two chambers to the King—Policy of the Duke de Richelieu—Spirit of the Council—Laws against ecclesiastical orders and individual liberty—Law of the prevotal courts—Discussion and vote in the two chambers—Proposition of the Duke de Fitzjames—Speech of the Count d'Artois—Return of the Duke de Orleans—His interview with Louis XVIII.	209
--	-----

BOOK THIRTY-THIRD.

The Reign of Terror of 1815—State of Paris—Situation of the South—Massacres at Marseilles—Assassination of Marshal Brune at Avignon—Massacre at Nîmes—The <i>Verdets</i> —Intervention of the Duke d'Angoulême—Execution of General Lagarde—Assassination of General Ramez at Toulouse—The twins of La Reole—Their trial—Their death—Labédoyère—His journey to Paris—His arrest—His trial—His death	255
---	-----

BOOK THIRTY-FOURTH.

Trial of Lavalette—His condemnation and escape—Fury of the Chamber at the news—Arrest of Marshal Ney—He is sent to Paris and brought before a court-martial—Noble conduct of Marshal Monecy—The Court declares itself incompetent—He is brought before the Chamber of Peers—Implacability of the ministers—Debates and divers incidents—Evidence of Bourmont—M. Bellart's address to the Court for the prosecution—Quibbles of the defence—Attitude of the Marshal—His condemnation—Vindictive intrigues of the royalists—Magnanimous intercession of Madame Hutchinson—Ney in his prison—His last moments—His interview with his family—His execution—Reaction of public opinion in favour and against the Bourbons	287
--	-----

BOOK THIRTY-FIFTH.

Antipathies of parties—Impassioned reaction in the departments: prevotal courts—Debates on the amnesty law: MM. Royer-Collard, De Labourdonnaye, and Chateaubriand—Production of the will of Marie Antionette—Relaxation in the severity of public opinion—Dissolution of the Chamber	
---	--

	PAGE
—Agitation in the departments—Conspiracy of Grenoble—Didier: his character, previous life, his connection with the Orleans party—His abortive attempt on Grenoble—Proclamations and dracolite vengeance—Flight and noble death of Didier—Palace intrigues: formation of the <i>Doctrinaire</i> party—The <i>Coup d'état</i> of the 6th September, ratified by the elections—Fury of the ultra-royalists: their private note to the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle—Evacuation of France by the allies—Memoir by Louis XVIII. on the ministerial crisis (December, 1818)	334

BOOK THIRTY-SIXTH.

1818-19—State of France—Struggle of parties—The Press—The <i>Minerve</i> ; P. L. Courier—The <i>Conservateur</i> ; Chateaubriand, Lamennais, de Broussais—Opening of the Session—Vote of a national recompense to M. de Richelieu—Barthélemy's proposition on the Electoral Law—Discussion on the recall of banished persons—M. de Serres—Increasing agitation of public opinion—Development of journalism: the <i>Courrier</i> , the <i>Constitutionnel</i> , the <i>Censeur</i> , the <i>Debate</i> , the <i>Quotidien</i> , the <i>Drapeau Blanc</i> —Stormy debates on the massacres of the South; parliamentary exposures—Various associations; the missions, the secret societies of Brussels, and of Paris; fermentation in Germany—Elections of 1819; nomination of Gregoire; General Foy—General spirit of the elections, hostile to the crown—Ministerial changes, opening of the session; exclusion of Gregoire—Project for modifying the Electoral Law	409
--	-----

BOOK THIRTY-SEVENTH.

Portrait of the Duke de Berry—Louvel: his previous life, his monomania of regicide—His determination to kill the Duke de Berry—Night of the 13th of February—Assassination of the Duke at the Opera: his death-bed—Grief of the royal family—Consternation of the public—Accusation against M. Decazes; M. Clausel de Coussergues charges him with high treason—Violent debates, palace intrigues—Madame du Cayla; her origin; her favour—The Viscount de la Rochefoucauld—Full of M. Decazes: review of his political career	439
---	-----

BOOK THIRTY-EIGHTH.

Opening of the debates on the Law of Election—M. Royer Collard, his previous life and character—Speeches of MM. Lainé, Carnot, Jordan, and Foy—Passing of the bill—Trial and execution of Louvel—Increasing hatred to the Bourbons: Secret Societies, Bonapartists, Counter-Revolutionists—M. Madier Montjan denounces to the Chambers the royalist conspiracies of the South—Birth of the Duke de Bordeaux—Revival of the spirit of independence in Europe: error of those who have ascribed the honour of it to Napoleon—Its real causes: ideas of nationality instilled by the European kings, the Napoleonic absorption—Revolution in Spain—Retrospective glance: Decay of that monarchy: Palace intrigues, Theocratical terrorism—The Prince of the Peace—Charles IV. his abdication and captivity—Heroism of Spain, the Cortes, the constitution of 1812—Return of Ferdinand VII.: reaction—O'Donnell—Revolutionary explosion: Riégo, Mina—Italy—State of this country in 1820: erroneous opinion concerning it—Carbonarism—Movement at Naples: Guglielmo Pepe—Equivocal conduct of the Court—Intervention of the Northern courts: Congress of Troppau, of Laybach: conclusion of the revolution at Naples—Movement in Piedmont—Carbonarism in France—Napoleon at St. Helena: his captivity—The memorial: unskilful justification of his memory—Hudson Lowe—Illness of Napoleon: his death: review of his reign	483
---	-----

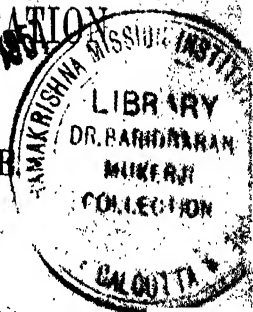
HISTORY OF THE RESTORATION

OF

MONARCHY IN FRANCE.

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The 24th June—Fouché is appointed President of the Provisional Government—Formation of the new Ministry—Fouché's policy—Manuel—Sitting of the Chamber of Representatives—It adopts Manuel's motion—The 25th of June—Departure of the Emperor from Paris—He goes to Malmaison—His farewell address to the Army—Five plenipotentiaries are sent to negotiate peace—Interview between Fouché and M. de Vitrolles—Interview between Napoleon and Benjamin Constant—Advice of Napoleon's friends on the choice of his place of exile—He makes choice of America—He is watched by the Provisional Government—Temporary opposition of the Government to the departure of Napoleon—His residence at Malmaison—Solicitations of the Provisional Government to Napoleon—It delivers him a passport—Refusal of Napoleon—Proposition of Excelmans to Napoleon—Arrival of the Allies at Compiègne—Napoleon proposes to put himself at the head of the Army—Refusal of the Provisional Government—Meeting of M. de Flahaut and Davoust—Napoleon and Maret—Critical situation of Napoleon—His departure from Malmaison—His farewell—His journey—His halt at Rambouillet—His hopes—Overtures of Excelmans to Daumesnil—Napoleon proceeds through Chateaudun, Tours, and Poitiers—Mob at St. Maixent—He arrives at Niort—Acclamations of the People—He arrives at Rochefort on the 3rd of July—Napoleon renews his proposal to the Provisional Government—Various counsels for the flight of Napoleon—His hesitation—Reply of the Provisional Government to his proposal—Napoleon embarks on board *La Saale* frigate on the 8th of July—He departs from Rochefort—His visit to the Isle of Aix—Interview between M. de Las Cases and Captain Maitland, on board the *Bellerophon*—The captain of the *Medusa* proposes to force a



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passage against the English cruiser—Refusal of Napoleon—He disembarks at the Isle of Aix—His indecision—He refuses the proposition of Captain Baudin—Some midshipmen offer to conduct him to America—Napoleon accepts the offer, and departs—He is kept back by his suite—Second interview of Las Cases, Rovigo, and Lallemand with Captain Maitland—Deliberation on his departure—Napoleon decides on going away by the *Bellerophon*—His letter to the Prince Regent of England—His instructions to Gourgaud—Departure of Gourgaud and Las Cases for England—Napoleon quits the Isle of Aix—His farewell to Becker—He embarks on board the *Bellerophon*—He receives a visit from Admiral Hotham—The *Bellerophon* arrives at Torbay—The Emperor is re-joined there by Gourgaud—Departure from Torbay and arrival at Plymouth—Cabinet Council of the English Ministers on the fate of Napoleon—He is declared a prisoner of war by the Allies—He is brought back to Torbay—He is required to deliver up his sword—His farewell—His grief on hearing of the Capitulation of Paris—He embarks on board the *Northumberland*—His Protest against England—His departure for St. Helena.

I.

HENCEFORWARD emergencies were to reign alone, and Fouché to govern by emergencies. He was that very night nominated president of the provisional government by the votes of Carnot and of Quinette, and by his own, which he gave in favour of himself, to deprive Caulaincourt or Carnot of the ascendancy conferred by the presidency; for he doubted their fidelity, or their weakness, in favour of Napoleon. He appointed a brother of Carnot minister of the interior, and M. Bignon, who was rather a man of learning than a statesman, easily played upon and cajoled by flattery, was made minister for foreign affairs. Pelet de la Lozère, an honest man, patriotic and conciliating, a pledge of moderation for all the parties which it was necessary to lull, obtained the ministry of police; Boulay de la Meurthe, a Bonapartist, whom it was necessary at once to employ and to nullify, by functions of slight political importance, was appointed minister of justice; Massena, who had evinced his independence in the Chamber of Peers, and whose name was distinguished by unblemished military glory, was appointed commander-in-chief of the National Guard.

The remainder of the night was employed by the provisional

Policy of Fouché.

government and by the ministers in concerting the greatest possible concentration of the fragments of the army around Paris, in order to give time and a military basis to the negotiations about to be opened. These negotiations, to a mind so acute and so generalizing as that of Fouché, were, in reality, only an appearance which he wished to preserve, and a satisfaction he wished to offer to the susceptibility of the nation. He well knew that negotiations can only exist between equal forces. Where were these forces? They had been annihilated at one blow at Waterloo. The confidential agents of Fouché already filled the court of Louis XVIII., and the head-quarters of Wellington. To give the signal to the King that the hour of his restoration was about to strike, to convince Wellington that he alone could open the gates of Paris, without a fresh effusion of blood, to the King and the allies; to persuade M. de Talleyrand, and through him the cabinet of the King, that he alone could pacify France; to lull the Chambers, to fascinate, to deceive, or to subdue the provisional government; to dismiss the Emperor, and finally, to present with his own hand, his regicidal hand, the people to the King, and the King to the people: this constituted from the very first day the whole secret and public policy of Fouché. Seldom did minister undertake one more complicated, or fraught with greater perils, or succeed in it with greater boldness united to more consummate ability. Fouché reckoned on the mediocrity of intellect, and the pliability of character of those around him. He reckoned also on the impatience of ambition to reign, which bent to his views the wishes of all at Ghent. He did not presume too much on the nullity of some, the servility of others, and the longing for the throne of an exiled court. Every vice and every ambition contributed to effect his object, because he was experienced in their ascendancy over the minds of men, and had the humiliating courage of calculating upon them.

II.

But he experienced one difficulty at the outset. The Emperor obstinately holding out at the Elysée, on hearing in

Influence of Manuel.

the morning that Grouchy was advancing with unbroken forces on Paris, and that imposing bodies of troops were rallying under Exelmans and other energetic generals, between Paris and Wellington, was already regretting his too hasty abdication, and fomenting, through his most faithful adherents, a new discussion in the Chamber of Representatives, on the regency question. Should this regency be proclaimed, he would again assume power, in the name of his son; if it were rejected, he would resume the Empire in consideration of the broken condition on which, as he said, he had based his abdication.

The proposal to proclaim Napoleon II. was therefore to be renewed, with better-concerted efforts, at the first sitting of the Chamber. Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angely, Boulay de la Meurthe, Defermon, councillor of state, rivals of Fontanes and of Cambacérès, were certain of winning over the irresolution of their colleagues. Fouché, informed of this attempt, which might disconcert his plans, hesitated for a moment whether he should oppose it openly, or baffle it by an apparent indifference. It was necessary to choose between the danger of reinstalling Napoleon himself on the throne, and at the head of the army, should the Chamber refuse to proclaim his son, and the more distant danger of breaking off the negotiations with the allied powers, and retarding the entrance of Louis XVIII., should the Chamber vote the preliminary sovereignty of Napoleon II. He held himself ready for one or other of these contingencies, according as the undecided Chamber should appear to lean, under the eloquence of the orators, for or against the dynasty of Napoleon.

Manuel, who possessed the confidence of Fouché, prepared to assist, with his powerful, patriotic, and practised eloquence, the political plans of the man who manœuvred externally in this conflict of opinions. Young, fresh, with a rising and pure fame, great courage, cool resolution, a penetrating glance, a patriotism almost republican, which freed him from the suspicion of connivance with the Bourbons, Manuel was more than an orator in the Chamber; he was already the foreshadowing of a statesman. His influence, though in its dawn, was great with his colleagues, and still greater out of doors. Lafayette

and Sebastiani cultivated his friendship. An enemy to Napoleon by the instinct of a free and lofty soul, the desire of obtaining either a republic, or a constitutional government from the ruins of military despotism, had connected him with, though not enslaved him to Fouché and the liberals who were weary of the yoke. Such was the situation of the Assembly at midday on the 25th of June.

III

M. Dupin, eager to smooth the road for an accommodation with the Bourbons, and to negotiations with the allies, which his keen perception of the circumstances indicated to him as indispensable to the public safety, having insisted that the new government should take the oath of fidelity to the nation alone, this motion became the signal of a struggle, the issue of which, whatever it should be, might for a few days restore to Napoleon the sceptre or the sword.

Defermon imperiously demanded who had authority to receive such an oath, and if there was not an Emperor in existence? "Yes," replied the Bonapartists; "we have an Emperor—we will have Napoleon II.!" He is our sovereign by the fundamental laws of the country. At this name alone the army and the National Guard will rally round their country! Yes, yes!" repeated the same voices, multiplied by that echo with which patriotism always swells those motions which appear to offer a bold defiance to the foreigner. This echo continued and increased in volume, till at length the hall resounded with cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" Beranger trembled lest an acclamation of national courage should be taken for a matured proclamation of a new Empire. He demanded a night for reflection. The Chamber, already cooling down, applauded him. Boulay de la Meurthe was indignant at this return to indifference: "France is lost!" he exclaimed, rebuking the weakness of his colleagues, "if we only seem to doubt the hereditary right to power of the son of the Emperor. We are surrounded by numerous intriguers and many factionists outside this hall," continued Napoleon's orator, alluding to

Speech of Dupin.

Fouché, the royalists, the republicans, and Lafayette. "They want to declare the throne vacant, in order to replace the Bourbons upon it! France would have the fate of Poland! The foreigners would divide its fragments amongst them! There is an Orleans faction in existence!" This excited murmurs of incredulity. "Yes!" continued Boulay, "I know that this faction exists; I know that it keeps up a correspondence with the republicans. If the Duke d'Orleans should accept the throne it would be to give it back to Louis XVIII. Prevent these plots, break these intrigues, and proclaim Napoléon II. Emperor of the French!"

IV.

Boulay was applauded, and seconded by other speakers on the same side. Mouton Duvernet, one of the generals most compromised in the defection of the 20th March, ventured to say that there was not a Frenchman who would not fly to arms in the service of the young Emperor. This courtly assertion roused the slumbering pride of the representatives. "Both you and we, generals and Emperor," exclaimed Flaugergues, indignant at the servility of this language, "are in the service of the nation!" Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angely repeated, and Defermon tempered the expressions: he was succeeded by Dupin.

"If Napoleon himself," said he, with a blunt severity of reasoning which left no scope for reply, "had thought he could still be useful to the nation, would he by abdicating have left to another the honour of saving it? How can we hope from a child that which a hero no longer hopes for us through himself?" The faction of the Elysée wished to drown his voice. "I ask," he resumed with imperturbable coolness, "if a captive child can do that which his father, free and a sovereign, acknowledges by his abdication to be beyond his own power? We are asked who we shall have to oppose to the enemy? I reply, the nation! It is that which exists before and which survives its rulers!"

Dupin, whose thoughts were floating, it is said, towards the

Manuel's motion adopted.

Duke d'Orleans, had carried the Chamber too far to please Fouché. That minister, who, a few weeks sooner, would have been favourable to such an expedient, had the good sense to acknowledge its impossibility after Waterloo. That battle had unavoidably restored the sceptre to the prince and the principle of legitimacy. To offer the crown now to the Duke d'Orleans would only be to create an additional obstacle to the pacification of the country, to offer a powerless defiance to Europe, and to insure a prolongation of the public calamities. The empty proclamation of Napoleon II. would entail none of these disadvantages. It would only have the value of an impotent protest; it would disarm for the moment the Bonapartists and the army, and by the removal of the Emperor it would enable the country to free itself from the alarms and menaces created by his presence in Paris. Fouché, therefore, pressed this issue forward with as much ardour as he would have evinced the evening before to prevent it; and with this object, Manuel, his organ, ascended the tribune.

V.

The speech he delivered was long, analytical, holding a just balance between contending opinions, with that apparent candour which concedes the honour due to every party, to obtain in return reason and attention. He analyzed without discouraging them; above all, he set aside the Orleanist party, whom Dupin had either made apparent or brought under suspicion. "The danger to be most apprehended," he said, in conclusion, "amongst all the opinions which divide us, is to expose the country by our hesitation. Let us declare, then, for Napoleon II." After this conclusion, which excited the enthusiasm of the Bonapartists, the orator read a draught of a declaration to this purport, but the ambiguity and indecision of which seemed rather the postponement of the recognition of another government than the proclamation of the government of Napoleon II. Public assemblies can always happily evade extreme measures, by one of those issues open to all parties.

Napoleon removes to Malmaison.

Manuel had simply saved the honour of the determined partisans of the Emperor, while in reality he completed their defeat.

Fouché, apparently vanquished, triumphed in reality. The Emperor, compelled to appear satisfied, was constrained at length to give up his position to the pretended government of his son, and to quit the Elysée and Paris. Already the representative, Duchesne, demanded from the tribune that he should be summoned to withdraw. Ominous information reached him from all parts on the dangers he incurred by prolonging his residence at that palace. Whether they arose from secret manœuvres of Fouché's police to intimidate him, or from the jealous zeal of his adherents to preserve his life, he was incessantly beset with warnings, in which abduction, the dungeon, poison, and the poignard, were held in perspective.

The state, in fact, could not, in presence of an enemy at the gates, and of factions in the interior, brook two masters with impunity. The Elysée had become a solitude; one veteran alone stood sentry at the gate, and the slightest movement of the parties might force it. The Emperor at last felt the necessity of quitting a capital kept in a state of inquietude by his presence, and which, after having welcomed him, abandoned him to solitude.

VI

He caused to be burnt in his presence, by his aides-de-camp and his secretaries, all the papers he had received since the 20th of March, and which might serve as the groundwork of accusations of complicity in his return. He only preserved his family correspondence.

At noon on the 25th he quitted the Elysée for his residence at Malmaison, the scene of his most prosperous years of power, of glory, and of happiness; but now filled with mourning for his great reverse, and with bitter recollections of his first wife, the Empress Josephine Beauharnais, who died there. His step-daughter, Hortense Beauharnais, whom he had loved sufficiently to elevate her to the throne of Holland, and to destine the Empire for her son, had gone before and awaited him at

Malmaison; a faithful adherent whom he had protected as a child, whom he had made a queen, but whose mother he had divorced. After the first abdication she had solicited from Louis XVIII. the title of Duchess of Saint-Leu, and permission to remain in the country. She had eagerly desired the return of Napoleon, kept alive the fanaticism of the Empire, through feeling or ambition, in the hearts of the young officers by whom she was surrounded; but faithful to him in his fall, she devoted herself to soothe the last hours of separation, and assisted him to descend with less violence from the lofty height to which he himself had elevated her. The mother had smoothed his ascent to unlimited power, the daughter sweetened for him the road to exile.

VII

On revisiting beloved localities the soul regains fresh vigour from the recollections with which they are associated. The Emperor, whose most complaisant biographers and most assiduous confidants all describe as overwhelmed, since his defeat at Waterloo, with a species of mental stupor, evinced by the languor, the uncertainty, the irresolution, and the sudden starts he exhibited from the battle-field up to the period of his departure from the Elysée, appeared now to resume in the abode of his youth the customary character of his soul, the resolution of his mind, and the vigour of his body. "He had not sufficiently learned," says his confidential secretary and domestic historian, "to struggle at an early age against adversity." Prosperity had accompanied him from the cradle to the summit of human happiness. He had been only half-educated in the effects which events produce upon great men, and had escaped the deceptions and the chastisements of destiny.

At Malmaison he was once more within the walls of the habitation of his time of glory, in the gardens of his recreation, in the silence and solitude of his retreat, and soothed by the tender solicitude of the child of his adoption. He allowed his fortune to take its own course at Paris, under the inspiration of Fouché and the march of events, without casting another

His farewell address to the army.

look behind him. The first days were devoted to distant memories and forgetfulness of the present. His soul unbent itself, relieved from the weight of the world and his own destiny. Such is the nature of man, happy to bear the burthen of power and glory, happy to relinquish it when its weight becomes oppressive. His confidants and Hortense found in him once more the image they had always cherished.

VIII.

But a whole day and night passed in this abode, abounding also in military recollections of the Consulate, renewed his feeling for that army of which he had been the hero. He could not think of quitting the country without addressing for the last time to his companions in arms a farewell, more sorrowful and eternal than that of Fontainebleau. The echo of his voice in the camp was pleasing to him even after having quitted the command and the Empire. He shut himself up in his cabinet and wrote an address to the army of Paris. But this address still breathed too strongly the accent of the Emperor and the habitual tone of sovereignty, not to appear to his confidants a withdrawal of his abdication and a menace to the government and the Chambers. This they observed to him, and he was obliged to concede the point. The act itself was somewhat bold in a man who was now no more than a citizen without a title, and a general without command. It might be tolerated out of consideration for the novelty of private life to a man who had never for twenty years been the equal of another; but it was injudicious to aggravate it by that magisterial tone which no longer became a deposed sovereign. He therefore patiently modified the language of this address, and sent it thus to the Parisian journals:—

“Soldiers! While obeying the necessity which removes me from the brave French army, I carry with me the happy conviction that it will justify by the eminent services which the country expects from it, the praises which our enemies themselves cannot withhold.

It is not allowed to be published.

"Soldiers! Though absent, I shall follow your steps. I know all the corps, and not one of them will ever gain a signal advantage over the enemy, without receiving ample credit from me for the courage it may have displayed. You and I have been calumniated. Men very unfit to appreciate your labours, have seen, in the marks of attachment which you have given me, a zeal, of which I was the sole object. Let your future successes convince them that in obeying me it was the country above all things which you served; and that if I had any share in your affection I owe it to my ardent love for France—our common mother.

Soldiers! A few more efforts and the coalition will be dissolved; Napoleon will recognise you by the blows which you are about to strike.

"Save the honour, the independence of France: be unto the last the same men which I have known you for these twenty years, and you will be invincible.

NAPOLEON

"De la Malmaison, 25th June, 1815."

IX.

This proclamation clashed too strongly with the circumstances of the time to produce much excitement amongst the troops. It was the accent of victory in the mouth of a vanquished and humbled chief. To promise the dissolution of the coalition as the price of some final efforts, to a people whose army without a chief was itself in a state of dissolution, and whose Emperor had just thrown away his sword and delivered up his sceptre to his enemies, was a derision which could only be borne from a man deprived of his genius by the excess of his adversity. The government, to which this address was transmitted from the Elysée, received it with disdain and did not suffer it to be published.

On the following day the Emperor having repeatedly inquired as to the effect produced on the army by his address, and having learned from his aides-de-camp the contempt with which it had been received by Fouché and his colleagues, was

Plenipotentiaries sent to treat for peace.

obliged to devour the insult in silence. This was the first time that the voice which had shaken the world found no echo in Paris to repeat it.

X.

The Emperor had scarcely departed for Malmaison when Fouché and the members of the commission, in obedience to public opinion and the wishes of the Chambers, appointed plenipotentiaries to go and negotiate for a suspension of hostilities, or for peace, at the head-quarters of Wellington and Blucher. These envoys were adroitly chosen from amongst the important members of both Chambers, who, since his reverses, had shown themselves most hostile to Napoleon and his family; and who, by their previous careers and patriotic opinions, had given the most apparent pledges for the independence of the country. These were, Sebastiani, both a soldier and a diplomatist, who had long been devoted to the Emperor, but was now detached from him, embittered, allied to the high Bourbon aristocracy, through the house of Coigny, into which he had married, and too intelligent not to know that between Louis XVIII. and Napoleon there was nothing but chimeras and impossibilities.

D'Argenson, a man of probity and patriotism, without repugnance to the Bourbons, of whom his high birth had made him a natural adherent, but sufficiently independent in character to sacrifice, if necessary, even his birth to his almost radical opinions; in other respects, a man easily deceived even through his virtues.

Pontécoulant, possessed of an honest heart, cool judgment, a soul devoid of fanaticism and prejudice, formerly a courtier, and subsequently a moderate revolutionist, some time attached to the Empire, but always to honour, which was the guiding star of his life. He was more capable than any one of saving the dignity of his country while yielding to the necessity of the times, and accepting a liberal restoration which was not repugnant either to his name or his recollections.

Laforêt an old ambassador of the republic and of Napoleon,

Instructions given to them.

convinced of the necessity of peace, and capable of negotiating it, if there had been grounds for negotiation.

Finally, Lafayette, one of the most violent opponents of Napoleon when down, to prevent him from rising again; deceived after his fall, by the vague hope of raising a republic upon his ruins, postponing his own part to another opportunity, always patient, always deceived, always on the watch for his time, and accepting in this delusive negotiation the shadow of a part that was not repugnant to the importance of his name.

Benjamin Constant, the friend of Lafayette and of Sebastiani, embarrassed at once between the liberal opposition which he had betrayed, and the imperial favour which had crumbled under his feet, was appointed secretary to this congress of negotiators. This was, for a man of so many faces, an adroit means of appearing to serve at the same time a remnant of the Napoleon cause in the cause of the country and of peace. Interposed, in the eyes of the patriots, between France and the foreign powers, he thus issued again from the ruins of the 20th March and of Waterloo, by the outlet of a capitulation in which he would appear at least to have stipulated for liberty. He was too clear-sighted to see anything else in this phantom of a negotiation

XI

The instructions given by the provisional government to these negotiators were to the effect that the basis of their negotiation should be the integrity of the French territory, the exclusion of the Bourbons, and the recognition of Napoleon II. In case these three bases should not be accepted by the allies, the negotiators were to combine all their efforts to obtain an armistice. The first part of these instructions was evidently nothing more than a dead letter, intended solely to lull for a few days longer the little that remained of Bonapartist enthusiasm in the Chambers and amongst the people. The armistice was the only serious part. This armistice, if not granted, would evince at least in the eyes of the Chambers the efforts of Fouché and his colleagues to have a negotiation in favour of the son of Napoleon; but if obtained, it would give to France

Intrigues of Fouché.

a foretaste of peace, which it desired too passionately to wish for a renewal of the war at the expiration of the suspension of arms, and it would give time for the seeds of imperialism to die in Paris, and for those of restoration to spring forth, ripen, and fructify.

Fouché, by this feigned hope of success, which in reality he did not entertain in an impossible negotiation, did not deceive himself, though he deceived all parties alike, imperialist, republican, liberal, and Orleanist. Everything indicates that, with the exception of the minister of foreign affairs, Bignon, and of D'Argenson, a man whose own candour laid him open to deception, all the other negotiators had their cue from Fouché, and that in reality they had but one object—the armistice. Every thing that has been written, then and since, about the pretended hopes of this negotiation, is a deception which those diplomats wished to prolong beyond the event, on the Bonapartist or Orleanist parties in France. The decision of history lies in the will of the allied powers and the wishes of Fouché. Neither the allies, as conquerors, nor Fouché, sold through the interest of his ambition to Louis XVIII., wished for anything else than the restoration of the house of Bourbon.

XII.

Fouché was conducting at one and the same time a triple negotiation: official with the allies, through the negotiators whose mission we have just narrated; confidential with the Duke of Wellington, whom he solicited to interest himself with the court of Ghent to obtain the most liberal declarations for France; finally, of an intimate character with Louis XVIII. to whom he wished to send M. de Vitrolles to urge him to throw himself between his people and the foreign invaders. M. de Vitrolles, whose officious and volunteer negotiation in 1814, between the royalists of Paris and the Count d'Artois we have already seen, had acquired a certain importance by his activity and his intermeddling between all the parties in the court of the Count d'Artois. Commissioned by the King a short time before the 20th March, to go and raise Toulouse

His interview with M. de Vitrolles.

against the Emperor, he had succeeded there for a few days; but being soon arrested by General Chartran, and conducted to Paris to be tried there, he had been imprisoned at Vincennes. His connection with Caulaincourt and with Fouché procured him his liberty, on the solicitation of his wife, immediately after the abdication of the Emperor. Fouché commissioned him, the very day he had appointed negotiators to the allied powers, to exclude the Bourbons, to go and invite Louis XVIII. to hasten his return to France.

"You see," he said to him, "the extreme embarrassment of my position. For the last three months I have risked my head every day for the cause of France, of peace, and of the King. The Chamber has proclaimed Napoleon II., which is a preliminary step towards the Bourbons. It was an indirect measure, but this impossible name reassures simple and systematic men who imagine, like my colleague Carnot, that the safety of France and of liberty exists in this chimera of a liberal Empire under a child who is the prisoner of Europe. They must be allowed to indulge in this delusion for a few days; it will last long enough to enable us to get rid of Napoleon. Carnot and his friends feed themselves with vain words, provided those words recall liberty and patriotism. After this period of superannuated partisans of Napoleon II., that of the partisans of the Duke d'Orleans will have its turn. This prince," added Fouché, intentionally magnifying the importance of this faction in the eyes of M. de Vitrolles, "can boast here of numerous partisans."

This faction, however, was then very limited, and possessed no other consequence than in some coteries of diplomatists and imperialists, eager to reconcile their defection from the Empire with their repugnance to the Bourbons. They gave no serious inquietude to Fouché; but, on the contrary, assisted to enhance the price of his services with the King, by exaggerating the obstacles that he wished to assume the honour of vanquishing in his cause.

M. de Vitrolles, alarmed at this false confidence of Fouché, declined going to Ghent, that he might remain at Paris to watch there, in the interest of Louis XVIII., and the Count

d'Artois, the pretended plots of the Orleans faction. This was all that Fouché wished ; for he had at Ghent confidential agents enough between himself and the princes, and he well knew that M. de Vitrolles would not fail, in his correspondence with the Count d'Artois, to enhance the dangers to be apprehended from the Orleanist party and the merit of Fouché. M. de Vitrolles merely requested the minister to answer to him for his liberty and his head, should he remain in Paris.

"Your head!" replied Fouché, with a smile; "how can I guarantee that to you when I am not sure of my own? All I can do is to promise you that they shall both fall together!" M. de Vitrolles, a man eminently calculated for double confidences and secret diplomacies, received from Fouché numerous passports for Ghent, to be used by his agents, and an invitation to visit the minister every day to discuss with him the interests of the King.

XIII

Before he departed for the head-quarters of the allied sovereigns, Benjamin Constant went to take leave of the Emperor. This negociator having asked him in what part of the globe he meant to choose an asylum to finish his days removed from the throne, "I have not yet decided," replied the Emperor, in a tone of indifference to his own fate. "Flight I disdain; and, moreover, why should I not remain where I am? What can the allied powers do to a disarmed man? I shall live in this retreat with a few friends who will continue attached not to my power but to my person."

He amused himself with anticipating the nature of this private life, so peaceable and free from care, as if past grandeur was unheeded, and he could descend at a single step from the throne to a private station.

"If they do not choose to leave me here," he said, "where would they like me to go? To England? But there my residence would be either ridiculous or disquieting. No one would believe that I could be tranquil there. Every mist would be suspected of bringing me to your coast; I should

Napoleon's opinion of the Chambers.

be put out of the pale of the law; I should compromise all my friends; and by dint of saying, 'There he is come at last,' I should at length be tempted to come in earnest. America would be more suitable. I could live there with dignity; but, after all, what have I to apprehend in staying where I am? What sovereign could persecute me without dishonouring himself? To one of them I have returned the half of his conquered states, and how many times has the other pressed my hand, felicitating himself on being the friend of a great man! I shall see, however. I do not wish to struggle against open force. I arrived at Paris to combine our last resources—I have been abandoned with the same facility that I was received! Well, let them efface, if possible, this double stain of weakness and frivolity! They should at least cover it with some struggle, some glory! Let them do for their country what they will no longer do for me! But I do not hope it," he added, with an incredulous accent. "They give me up to-day," they say, "to save France, but to-morrow they will give up France to save their own heads!"

XIV

Another of his visitors having congratulated him on the departure of the plenipotentiaries commissioned to present to the allied powers the recognition of his dynasty as the ultimatum of France: "No," he replied, "the allies are too much interested in imposing the Bourbons upon you to give my son the crown! The names of the plenipotentiaries belie their instructions. Lafayette, Pontécoulant, and Sebastiani are my enemies; they have conspired against me; the enemies of the father cannot be the friends of the son! Moreover, the Chambers obey the wishes of Fouché. If they had given to me what they have lavished upon him I should have saved France. My presence alone at the head of the army would have done more than all your negotiations!" He forgot that he had himself quitted that army, where, by his presence, he might, in fact, still have fought or negotiated. "I alone," he incessantly repeated, "could retrieve all; but

Caulaincourt advises his escape to America.

your plotters would rather bury themselves in the gulf than save themselves with me."

These plotters, however, were all men who had issued from the 20th March as his ministers, his marshals, his generals, his partisans, who had sacrificed with him and for him the last army of France. But ambition never deems itself sufficiently served unless the country itself is offered up as its victim!

The affectation he displayed in considering himself at perfect liberty to prolong his residence at Malmaison had evidently for its object to await still some vicissitude of events in his favour. In the secret outpouring of his thoughts to his most intimate confidants, Caulaincourt and Maret, he already spoke of retiring to England, and demanding there the hospitality of a free soil. Maret dissuaded him from this step. Caulaincourt advised him if he meant to adopt it not to lose a moment to assure its success; to embark on board a smuggling vessel, to land on the English coast, to appear before the first magistrate at the place of his landing, and to invoke from him the protection which England affords to every stranger who touches its soil. He began again to deliberate with himself, and seemed inclined to go to America. He demanded of the naval minister a list of the American vessels at anchor in the French ports, and it was sent to him.

"Remark above all, Sire," said the minister to him, in the letter containing this information, "an American vessel stationed at Havre; its captain is now in my antechamber; his vehicle is waiting at my door; he is ready to start; I answer for him, he awaits your orders, and to-morrow, if you wish, you will be on the high seas, under a private flag, and sheltered from every attempt of your enemies!"

Caulaincourt, in his double capacity, as a member of the government, interested in freeing France from the dangerous presence of its master, and as the friend of Napoleon responsible for his safety to his own honour, anxiously entreated the Emperor to profit by this providential opportunity to escape. "I know well," said Napoleon to him with unjust bitterness, "that my departure is already longed for by some,

General Becker appointed to command his guard.

to rid themselves of my presence at any price, and to deliver me up a prisoner to my enemies!" Caulaincourt replied by a gesture of indignation and reproach, but the Emperor assured him that the remark was not intended to apply to him. "After all," he repeated to his old minister, "what have I to apprehend? It is the duty of France to protect me!"

XV

Meanwhile the Chambers were urging the government to remove, in him, the obstacle to the negotiations, the exciting cause of the agitation of Paris, and the still dangerous tribune of the army. The Emperor replied to the applications of the government on this subject, that he was ready to embark for the United States, with his family, if he was furnished with two frigates. The minister of marine instantly ordered these two frigates to be equipped, and M. Bignon, minister of foreign affairs, demanded a safe-conduct for him from the Duke of Wellington.

But the government and the Chambers, informed of the vacillations of Napoleon, and fearing from the multiplied indications which they received from Malmaison, that these vacillations and tardy proceedings were nothing more on his part than *manœuvres* to gain time, and to find an opportunity of having himself carried off by a body of his army, or to place himself of his own accord at the head of a military insurrection, which would resume the conflagration, and overturn the Chambers, decided on having him watched by a military commandant of his household, merely half disguising his captivity under the honours due to his former rank. General Becker, brother-in-law to General Desaix, who was killed at Marengo while deciding Napoleon's first victory, received orders to repair to Malmaison, to assume there the command of the Emperor's guard, under the semblance of a guard of honour, charged with the safety of the deposed prince. But he was, at the same time, charged with the duty of preventing any one from making use of the name or the person of the Emperor to excite disturbance.

Becker's interview with Napoleon.

Davoust, minister of war, and invested with the command in chief of the army since the abdication, intimated to General Becker the orders, at once respectful and severe, which suited such a mission. Becker, who was attached to Napoleon, but more attached to his country and to his duty as a soldier, received these orders with grief, and executed them with decorum. But their meaning could not escape Napoleon. He saw in them the first menace of the extremities to which his obstinacy or his indecision might impel the Chambers, his enemies, and even the friends he had in the government. He was at first indignant as at Fontainebleau and at the Elysée; he then yielded with an appearance of indifference, and even of grace, as if he wished to conceal his abasement from himself, and to seem still to command at the moment he was compelled to obey. His adherents anticipated some sinister order, and arrest and imprisonment were spoken of. Gourgand, an enthusiastic young man, in whose breast, as with all noble natures, adversity augmented devotion, vowed to immolate the first who should dare to lay a hand on his master. Tears were flowing in the apartment of Queen Hortense.

XVI.

Becker affected at sight of the Emperor, ashamed of his rigorous mission, and but ill-concealing the emotion which the sight of this downfall excited in his sensitive heart, accosted Napoleon with a respectful compassion. He seemed to ask pardon of him for the severities and reverses of fortune. Napoleon drew him into the garden, and asked him, with the indifference of familiarity, what was passing at Paris. Becker replied to him with that considerate adulation which compassion authorises towards irretrievable adversity. He could not, however, conceal from his former general that if he had not abandoned his army after Waterloo, he might have, if not conquered, at least intimidated at the same time both Paris and the foreign powers, at the head of his troops, or behind the ramparts of Strasbourg; and thus, by giving

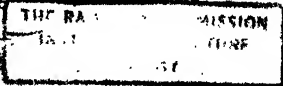
Perplexity of the Provisional Government.

time for negotiation, have secured the inheritance for his son and conditions for France. "I expected better things from the Chambers and from France," said the Emperor in his own exoneration; "but I soon discovered that all were exhausted and demoralised!" Becker assumed the command of the Emperor's residence.

On the following day he conversed again with Napoleon, whose thoughts had undergone a change in the night, and who now spoke of nothing but his departure. He sent Savary to the government to hasten the preparation of the two frigates. Fouché told him they were ready, but that he would not allow them to sail until the safe-conducts had arrived; not wishing, he said, to dishonour his memory by an act of imprudence, which would be called a snare and a treason should the frigates be taken with Napoleon on board, when leaving port. Carnot himself became impatient at these alternate solicitations and refusals of the Emperor. "Nobody wishes," he said with ill-humour to Savary, "to throw any obstacle in the way of his departure. On the contrary, we wish to take measures never to see him here again!" Caulaincourt, on his side, entreated Savary to persuade the Emperor to depart without further delay. "Tell him," he added, "that I supplicate him to do so, and that he cannot go too soon."

XVII

On the evening of the 27th, Fouché and his colleagues, overwhelmed by the double responsibility occasioned by the presence of Napoleon, fatal to the country if he escaped, and equally fatal to their fame if made prisoner by the enemy, ordered the minister of marine to go to Malmaison and to declare to the Emperor that the frigates placed at his disposal were ready, and that they begged him to embark even before the arrival of the safe-conducts. One hour later, this order of the government to the minister of marine was revoked. In consequence of the progress of the allies around Paris and Malmaison, and the presence of English cruisers on the



Napoleon's remaining adherents.

coasts, Fouché ordered the minister of war, Davoust, to send troops and gendarmes to General Becker to guard the approaches of Napoleon's residence, and to prevent his flight. In consequence of these new orders which rendered the captivity of the Emperor closer, Becker was authorised alone to escort him, without losing sight of him, to the Isle of Aix, where he was either to embark, or to remain under surveillance until the sea was open for him, or that the sureties demanded of England for his departure should be granted. Fouché, Davoust, and the government at the same time recalled from Malmaison, under various pretexts of civil or military service, the officers of the Emperor's household who might assist him in his designs of resisting his exile, and foment in his breast, or amongst the neighbouring troops, ideas of revolt against the abdication.

His court thus decimated, as much by the measures of government as by that natural void which creates itself around hopeless misfortune, no longer consisted of any but men irremediably compromised in his return from the Isle of Elba: Maret, Lavalette, Flahaut, Gourgand, Bertrand, Montholon, Savary, and Las Cases. The last of these, an old emigrant of aristocratical family, was only a simple chamberlain, admitted into the superior household of the palace, and subsequently into the council of state after his return from emigration. He had no complicity in the new attempt at empire. More inclined from his birth and connexions to the Bourbons than to the new reign, he was a volunteer in the imperial downfall. A man of study, and familiar with history, he knew that even the most obscure fidelity receives from the great men to whom it attaches itself under great calamities, a reflex of greatness and immortality. He meditated being one day the historian of that exile upon whom the eyes of the world and of posterity were to be for ever fixed. With this idea he sued for a place in the adversity of Napoleon, as others, and he himself, would have sued for one in his prosperity. A noble flatterer who had caressed the Empire through ambition, and who was going to flatter exile through the vanity of devoted attachment! He was only

His unwillingness to depart.

acquainted with the Emperor by sight, and the Emperor only knew him by name.

XVIII.

General Becker acknowledged to the Emperor the rigorous orders he had received. But being repugnant to the office of gaoler which these orders inflicted upon him, he went to Paris to receive an explanation, or a modification of them from the members of government. He again received an order to accelerate the departure of Napoleon, and to accompany him to the Isle of Aix in the roadstead of Rochefort. He received a passport in which Napoleon was designated as secretary to this general; for they apprehended some commotions of the troops or the people, either for or against him, on the route. It is not known whether Becker was furnished with private instructions in such an event; but in the accomplishment of duties so delicate and complicated this officer displayed a fidelity and propriety which happily combined the character of a soldier obeying the orders of his country, and that of a man of feeling respecting alike his own dignity and the dignity of misfortune. On his return to Malmaison he communicated the order for departure, and the passport, to the Emperor. "Behold me then your secretary!" said the prisoner, in a tone of resignation. "Yes, Sir," replied Becker with emotion, "but to me you are ever my sovereign!"

XIX

Preparations were now ostensibly made for departure, but everything around Napoleon still indicated that these preparations and this resignation were only a feint, and that a pretext was still looked for to revolt against necessity. The Emperor had been willing to relax as far as Malmaison the links which attached him to the Empire, but he could not resolve on severing them altogether by a departure. He waited for chances, he hoped impossibilities. The first corps of Grouchy's army were approaching nearer and nearer to him, driven back by the Prussians and the English. A brave and enterprising general

Proposition of General Excelmans.

of cavalry, who only recognised the camp as his country, and the Emperor as its government, meditated the abduction of his former general, to replace him at the head of his squadrons, to collect around him the 80,000 scattered men, the remnants of the campaign, and to confide once more to his genius, behind the Loire, the death-struggle with the foreign invaders. This was Excelmans, whose breach of discipline, arrest by Soult, and popular disgrace, we have seen under the first restoration.

Excelmans sent one of his colonels, named Sencier, to Malmaison, to tempt Napoleon to this noble act of despair. "The army of the north," said the colonel in the name of his general, "is unbroken, and full of enthusiasm still for you. It is easy to rally round this nucleus of troops everything that remains of patriotism and military spirit in France. Nothing is to be despaired of with such troops under such a chief." The Emperor reflected, and, as had been constantly the case for the last four months, he scarcely saw the prospect of realizing his hopes when he abandoned them for others, and eventually fell back upon obstacles and resignation. "Thank your general for me," he said to Excelmans' envoy, "but tell him I cannot accept his proposition. I should require the whole support of France; but everything is unsettled, and nobody cares any more about the matter! What could I do alone with a handful of soldiers against all Europe?" Thus he confessed with the sincerity of the soldier what he incessantly denied in the official language of the politician, in the face of the government, the Chambers, and the people. To these he affirmed that he alone could save all, and restore all; to Excelmans he acknowledged that he could do nothing more for the country, for the army, or for himself. He had already adopted two modes of expression; one confidential, the other for the public. He wished to appear the victim of general desertion, when he was only the sport of necessity. He deceived history, but no longer deceived himself.

XX.

Meanwhile the enemy was surrounding him, and was already encamped at Compiègne, from which a detachment of cavalry

Napoleon sends Becker to Paris.

might cross the Seine and carry him off. He could hear the cannon from the midst of his gardens. This noise appeared to reanimate him; he called for his horses and his arms, as if the resolution of dying with those who were dying in his cause so near him had at length conquered in his breast the lethargy in which he had languished for so many days. He summoned General Becker into his cabinet, and, excited by the fever which the sound of the cannon produces in the soldier's breast, he exclaimed in an accent of despair, "The enemy is at Compiègne, at Senlis! To-morrow he will be at the gates of Paris! I cannot understand the blindness of the government. He must be either a lunatic or a traitor to his country who doubts for a moment the bad faith of the foreigner. Those persons," he added, speaking of the Chambers and of the government, "know nothing of their business."

He expected some sign of approval from General Becker, who held his tongue, however, neither wishing to accuse the Emperor of these disasters, nor to encourage him in thoughts which might still further aggravate them. The Emperor affecting to take this silence for an acquiescence in his ideas, "Everything is lost—is it not?" said he to Becker. "Well, then, in this case, let them make me general: I will command the army: I will apply for the command." Then taking the first step as it were, and suddenly assuming that tone of command which forbids objection by the authority of the tone: "General," said he, "you shall take my letter to the government. Depart at once—a carriage awaits you. Explain to them that my intention is not to repossess myself of power; that I only wish to fight the enemy, to crush him, to force him by a victory to grant better conditions; and that when this result is obtained, I shall pursue my route. Go, general; I reckon upon you." Then, as if desirous of holding out a lure to the infidelity of Becker by the perspective of high favour, the reward of his complaisance, he added, as he dismissed him, "You shall not quit me any more."

XXI.

Becker, uncertain of his position, but influenced by the ascendancy of that voice which he was accustomed to obey, did not venture to oppose him to his face, and set off to accomplish a mission of which no one felt the absurdity more than himself. On arriving at the Tuileries he timidly presented to the assembled government the message of his prisoner, which was couched in the following terms:—

“In abdicating power I have not renounced the noblest right of the citizen—the right of defending my country. The enemy's approach to the capital no longer leaves the least doubt as to their intentions or their bad faith. In these grave circumstances I offer my services as general, still looking upon myself as the first soldier of the country.”

This letter, derisive in its purport, though noble in its language, sufficiently betrayed the popularity-seeking intention with which it had been written. Who could have doubted that the enemy, assaulted on a foreign soil by Napoleon himself, would follow up their victory by repelling the aggressor upon the French soil? What bad faith could be attributed to Wellington and to Blucher, as conquerors, having agreed to no armistice, in advancing upon Paris? And finally, how could Napoleon, as a general, have had more ascendancy over fortune at the head of the fragments of the army abandoned by himself some days before, than he had possessed as emperor and general at the head of unbroken armies, warlike and united under his hand?

Fouché, as president, received the letter from the timid hands of Becker, read it aloud to the council, with the accent and gesture of one wearied with lunacy; then throwing it on the table, “Is this man amusing himself at our expense?” said he. “Doubtless,” he added, looking at Becker with the penetrating glance of suspicion, “this letter is nothing more than a deferential formality towards the Chambers, while at the very moment that we have received it he has already escaped from Malmaison, and is reviewing his soldiers, and

Becker's return : Mission of M. de Flahaut.

haranguing them against us." Becker vowed that the Emperor was waiting his return and their reply.

They deliberated for a few moments. Carnot alone at first appeared to accept the antique idea of replacing for a moment the Emperor at the head of the army. Fouché demonstrated that Napoleon was the sole cause of the war, and that his presence at the head of the army would be defiance personified anew to Europe, and an invincible obstacle to all accommodation both for the army and the country. He added, that the character of Napoleon forbade all belief in any durable disinterestedness of power in such a mind ; and that if he obtained sufficient success to reascend the throne for the third time, he would drag down in his last and inevitable fall the army, the capital, the soil, and even the integrity of the country.

Carnot, Caulaincourt, Davoust, and all the members of the government did not hesitate in acknowledging the solid considerations urged by Fouché against this instance of weakness and caprice. Carnot took upon himself, in order to soften the refusal, and to convince Napoleon by the word and the heart of a man whom he did not doubt, to forward considerations less severe, but quite as peremptory, to Malmaison.

XXII

During the short absence of Becker, the Emperor, either believing, or feigning to believe, in the consent of the government, had dressed himself, assembled his aides-de-camp, bade farewell to Hortense, and had his chargers bridled and saddled, and kept in readiness at the palace gate.

Becker, on arriving, gave him the reply of the government, which he read and threw away with disdain. "I knew it before hand," he said. "Those people have no energy ! Well, general," he added, addressing Becker as if he had made sure of him, "since that is the case, let us go ! Come on !"

Becker, more and more embarrassed, was silent and motionless. The Emperor then called M. de Flahaut, a younger man, more decided in yielding everything to the Emperor, or bending everything to his will. Napoleon ordered him to hasten

M. de Flahaut's interview with Davoust.

to Paris, and to arrange with the government for his positive departure for the army. M. de Flahaut obeyed. On entering the Tuileries he stumbled on Marshal Davoust, minister of war, a military man, faithful up to that point when fidelity became treason to his country. Davoust, firm in resolution, and rough in language, energetically repulsed the mission of Flahaut to the government. "Your Bonaparte," he said to him, with an accent of impatience and disgust, "does not wish to go away! But he must decide on it, for his presence disturbs and complicates everything. We can neither fight nor negotiate with him! If he flatters himself that we shall take him again for our master and our chief tell him he deceives himself! Let him depart immediately, or we shall be compelled to arrest him. If necessary, to save the country and the army, I will arrest him myself!"

The Emperor's aide-de-camp replied that he had too much respect for himself, and also for Marshal Davoust, to deliver to the Emperor such menaces, on the part of one of his generals, who, only a week before, received his orders, and lavished upon him his zeal. Davoust answered him with all the authority of a minister of war over a subordinate officer, and directed him to proceed to Fontainebleau, and await there his orders. "I shall not go there," said M. de Flahaut: "I shall not abandon the Emperor, but will preserve for him to the last moment the fidelity which others have sworn to him." "I shall punish you for this," cried Davoust. "I deprive you of the right to do so," replied the young man. "I resign my commission, and henceforth I have only to obey my honour."

XXIII

On the return of his aide-de-camp the Emperor perceived on his features the traces of sorrow, and desired to know all; the aide-de-camp told him everything that had passed. "Let him come," cried Napoleon; "I am ready, if necessary, to lay my head on the block!" He dismissed his equerries, sent his horses back to the stables, and again resumed his complaints, in the privacy of his garden and the circle of his attached

Napoleon and Maret.

courtiers. "Those men," he said to Maret, "are intoxicated with the kingly part they are playing. They feel that if they replaced me at the head of the army they would be nothing more than my shadow! In their pride and self-consequence they can scarcely bear me. They will ruin everything!" As if everything had not been already lost.

From time to time he regained, or affected to regain, his energy after a depression of spirit, like Tiberius negotiating with the Senate, sometimes with resignation, sometimes with insolence. "But why should I allow them to reign?" he exclaimed with a sudden excitement of mind and body. "I have abdicated for my son; but if this name is to be lost, I would rather lose it on the field of battle than motionless here!" "I can do nothing better for my son or myself than to throw myself into the arms of my soldiers! My appearance will electrify the army and confound the enemy!"

He no longer recollected that only the evening before he had on reflection rejected this step, offered to him by the heroic temerity of Exelmans. He resumed: "The enemy, knowing that I have only returned to the field to crush them or to die, will grant you, to get rid of me, everything you demand. If, on the contrary, you leave me here rusting my sword, they will despise you, and you will be compelled humbly to receive Louis XVIII. It must have an end! If your five emperors," alluding thus to the five members of the government, "will not have me to save France, I shall dispense with their consent! It will be sufficient to show myself: Paris and the army will receive me a second time as a liberator!" "I believe it, Sir," replied Maret, accustomed to believe everything from the unlimited power of his master; "but if the Chamber should outlaw you—if fortune should desert your arms—what would become of your Majesty?"

"Well, well!" replied the Emperor, yielding in appearance to the counsels of friendship, with the same facility that he would rebel anew against destiny, "I see that I must yield! You are right; I ought not to take upon myself the responsibility of so great a resolution. I ought to wait till the voice of the people, of the Chambers, and of the army recalls me;"

Critical situation of Napoleon.

then, as if he expected every instant to hear this imaginary cry of public opinion: "But how is it that Paris has not already recalled me?" he exclaimed. "They do not perceive then that the enemy makes no account of my abdication. That infamous Fouché!" he continued; "he deceives you!" The provisional government, itself deceived, consents to be conducted by him alone. Some day or other it will have to undergo great reproaches! There is nobody there but Caulaincourt and Carnot who are worth anything; but they have bad associates. What can these two devoted men do against a traitor?—two imbeciles, and two Chambers fluctuating with every breeze! You all believe, like dupes, in the promises and generosity of the foreigners. You think they are going to give you a prince such as you desire. You deceive yourselves. Alexander will obey the English, and Austria will obey Alexander!"

XXIV.

Some generals, most compromised in the events of March, and most threatened by the return of the Bourbons, now besieged him with demands for money to save their lives. He distributed to them some trifling aid by the hand of Hortense, who trembled, from their constant importunity, for the safety of her step-father.

One of his confidential secretaries, whom he had sent in search of news, informed him that the enemy's troops were touching the walls of Paris on three sides, and that it was time to think of his personal safety. "I shall fear nothing from them to-morrow," he replied; "I have taken measures to depart this night; I am weary of myself, of Paris, and of France. Prepare yourself to follow me!" The secretary excused himself on account of the age and infirmities of his mother. Napoleon pretended to be satisfied with these excuses, which multiplied around him from hour to hour. "I want nothing more now than a good wind and good fortune," he said, with an accent of resolution resigned to fate. "I shall go to America, where they will give me some land, or else I shall purchase it, and we shall cultivate it. I shall finish where

Blucher's feeling towards him.

man has commenced; I shall live on the produce of my land and of my flocks!" To some objections offered by his confidant, touching the proximity of Europe and the United States: "Well then," he continued, "I shall go to Mexico, and put myself at the head of the Independents! I shall go, in short, from shore to shore, and from sea to sea, until I shall find an asylum against the resentment and the persecution of men. In reality, what would you have me do? Would you have me allow myself to be taken like a child by Wellington, to adorn his triumph in London? I have only one course to adopt—that of retiring from the scene. Destiny will do the rest! Certainly I could die! I could say, like Hannibal, 'Let me deliver them from the terror with which I inspire them!' But suicide must be left to weak heads, and souls badly tempered! As to me, whatever may be my destiny, *I shall never hasten my natural end by a single moment!*" He thus refuted the drama of suicide which his sycophants had arranged for him at Fontainebleau. 18, 685

XXV.

Savary, whom he had ill-treated on his return from the Isle of Elba, and who redeemed the devotion of his unscrupulous services by the disinterested obstinacy of his fidelity, also advised him, not to terminate his life with his own hand, but to seek for death under the cannon which was now destroying France.

Malmaison was already outflanked by the light troops of Blucher. "If I can take him prisoner," said the latter to Wellington, "I shall have him hanged at the head of my columns!" This general, possessed of a savage energy, burned to avenge the Queen of Prussia, killed by the implacable acts of Napoleon, and the annihilation of her country. Wellington, on the contrary, was indignant at these shameful reprisals; he respected while he combatted his enemy. The Emperor, on finding danger so close to him, sent to ascertain if the bridges of Bezons and of Pecq, which covered Malmaison, had been cut; but as this had not been done, the officers

Remarks on Napoleon's hesitation.

of his household, and the troops commanded by Becker, made defensive arrangements round his residence to resist any sudden attempt. The night was passed in these agitations.

At three o'clock in the morning the friends he had still left in the Chamber of Deputies and in the government came to inform him that the allies had refused the safe-conducts and passports which had been asked for by Fouché, and that he had scarcely time left to escape captivity by flight. He still asked for some hours' delay, and promised to depart in the course of the day.

General Becker had received orders not to allow him to return when once he had departed, and the naval commandant at Rochefort received instructions not to permit him to land again on the soil of France when he should have embarked for the Isle of Aix. Historians have represented this order of the government, and the whole of the circumstances which preceded the departure of Napoleon from Malmaison, as so many snares concerted by the members of the commission and by Fouché to ruin him. But these accusations are belied by the facts. We have seen that the government never ceased for an instant to desire and to hasten the departure of the man who embarrassed at once the peace, the war, and the free movements of the country, from his arrival at the Elysée till the 29th June; and that these ten days lost by Napoleon in feeble longings for the dictatorship, in abdicating, in resuming his thoughts of empire, in calculated delays, in irresolution, in contests with necessity, with the government, and with himself, would have given him time and means enough for security in his flight. We have also seen that when once engaged in negotiations with the victorious enemy, the government could not, while it was treating, or perhaps after having treated, permit Napoleon, the sole cause of the war, to return to the territory which he had freely quitted, and to renew the contest after a capitulation, the very first condition of which was his removal. It was not the fault of the Chambers that Napoleon fluctuated for ten days between the different parties; allowing the power to escape him in Paris, the enemy to approach the capital in masses and by forced marches, and the light troops of Welling

Justification of the Provisional Government.

ton and Blücher to occupy Compiègne and Senlis, and to turn the flank of Malmaison.

A triple responsibility weighed upon the members of the government: to relieve the negotiations from the person and the presence of the Emperor; to prevent, on his part, after the abdication, an attempt at a military dictatorship, which would place everything in jeopardy, even the existence of Paris, and the integrity of the national soil; finally, to prevent, should the Emperor be taken at Malmaison by the enemy, an appearance of his being delivered up by France, and thus tarnishing the peace itself with dishonour. In the state of perplexity in which the obstinacy of Napoleon placed the government on the 29th June, under the enemy's cannon, there evidently remained no other course to pursue than that of sheltering the person of Napoleon at the Isle of Aix, within reach of the frigates which had been prepared for him, or of the means of escaping by sea which were offered to him, and to prohibit him, until his embarkation, from returning to the soil of France. It was not the perfidy of the government which had so much retarded his departure from Malmaison, waited for such extremities, and increased the difficulties of his flight,—it was his own will. We shall further see that it was entirely by his own will that flight became impossible. History ought not to make itself the complaisant and lying echo of the odious accusations of the family or the household of Napoleon; neither should it dishonour the nation to exonerate a great man from his mental irresolutions. In all these final circumstances of his departure, Napoleon was only betrayed by himself. He still clung to the shore,—it eluded his grasp.

XXVI.

He again consumed the whole of the 29th in vague hopes, in desperate expectations, in fruitless glances cast towards Paris, and towards every point of the horizon, in walking in his garden, in conversing with his confidants, and in lengthened farewells to his family and his friends. At five o'clock in the evening he was informed that the two carriages which General

Napoleon's departure from Malmaison.

Becker had ordered awaited him in the park. He embraced Queen Hortense, who was overcome with grief, made a melancholy sign of farewell to the officers and soldiers of his guard; and plunging into the park alley, at the extremity of which the carriages were stationed, he turned round several times to contemplate that dear abode of his youth, of his happiness, and of his glory; and at length entered a plain summer calash with General Becker, his grand marshal of the palace, Bertrand, and Savary.

Two other carriages, which were to proceed to Rochefort by another road, were filled with his suite, consisting of Gourgaud, the wife and children of General Bertrand, M. and Madame de Montholon, M. de Las Cases and his son, young Emmanuel, besides several servants. Napoleon, Becker, Bertrand, and Savary had laid aside their uniforms, and assumed travelling dresses, to escape observation and avoid mobs on the route. Gourgaud alone travelled in full uniform, in a gilded carriage of the Emperor, in order that the people's attention, deceived by this luxury and display, might attract to this carriage alone the snares and dangers of the road, if the perfidy of the Emperor's enemies had prepared any, or if by the spontaneous commotions of the populace he might incur them.

The districts which Napoleon would have to pass through were scarcely pacified after the royalist insurrections against him. Becker was desirous of travelling fast, the sooner to insure the security of the deposit confided to his charge, and to relieve himself, as early as possible, from a responsibility which lay heavy on his heart. But on arriving at Rambouillet, Napoleon wished to pass the night there. He even maintained upon his road to exile, the illusion he had nourished for the last ten days. He could not believe that France would allow her hero to depart without recalling him. The long sleepless night he passed at Rambouillet was only occupied with waking dreams of recall by the people, by the army, or by the Chambers, in whose breasts he imagined the news of his departure would have excited remorse and anxiety to retain him. He passed the night listening to every noise in the town, and he sent General Gourgaud several times upon the road to Mal-

Incidents on his journey.

maison, to listen, amidst silence and darkness, for the noise of approaching couriers, which he incessantly expected from that direction.

Excellmans had in fact arrived at Vincennes on the evening of the 29th with two divisions of dragoons, still influenced by the same idea which he had communicated to the Emperor through his aide-de-camp, Colonel Seneier. He had not been discouraged by Napoleon's first refusal, and thought of doing violence to his indecision. He communicated his project to General Daumesnil, commandant of Vincennes; but the latter acquainted him with the departure of Napoleon, and Excellmans no longer thought of anything but distinguishing himself by some bold stroke against the Prussians.

XXVII.

Although the night had brought no news from Paris, the Emperor would not consent to tear himself away from Rambouillet till the middle of the next day, the 30th. It might be said that he was desirous of enjoying to the last moment the recollections of grandeur and of empire recalled by this imperial residence. At noon he departed for Chateaudun, where it was reported that Napoleon had been killed in a rencounter with the Prussians. On changing horses he was recognised by the post-mistress, who wept in silence on beholding him. He passed through Tours and Poitiers without stopping. At St Maixent a threatening mob gathered round his carriage. General Becker opened a passage through the town by means of an officer of gendarmerie, who had been attracted by the tumult, and at night they arrived at Niort.

Napoleon, relying on his safety in a town where he had concentrated some troops of observation against La Vendée, was desirous of remaining there for a day. He slept at the post-house, and opening his window in the morning he took a pleasure in allowing himself to be recognised by some hussars who were grooming their horses in the square. Their cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" that watchword of the soldiers, everywhere roused the town, and attracted the inhabitants under his win

His arrival at Rochefort.

dows. The prefect immediately hastened to offer him the hospitality of his house, and during the day the prefecture was surrounded by the troops and the populace, who saluted him with acclamations. They feared nothing more from his ambition, and only recollected his glory. During the whole day he gave audience to the officers, the functionaries, and the inhabitants, who thronged to salute in him the disarmed hero. Some of these officers conjured him to put himself at their head and renew the war. He seemed to derive a pleasure from these entreaties, and to wish that the feelings of these soldiers should be disseminated amongst the people. He ordered General Becker to send a courier to the government to acquaint them with the enthusiasm excited amongst the troops by his presence, to make them apprehensive of an open, forcible resistance to his departure, and finally, to acquaint them, that news received from Rochefort announced that all egress from the roadstead for the frigates was stopped by the English cruisers. "The government," he incessantly repeated, "is ignorant of the feeling of the country; it was too hasty in sending me away from Paris. If it had accepted my last proposition things would have had a different aspect. I might still exercise a great influence on political affairs; my name would have served as a rallying point." He also ordered General Becker to write to the government, that he again offered his services as general of an army for the defence of Paris.

Becker obeyed, as a final act of complaisance, and to soothe to the last the sorrows and the bitterness of his prisoner.

XXVIII.

Having at length arrived at Rochefort on the morning of the 3rd July, he stopped at the hotel of the maritime prefecture. "His attitude during the whole journey," says General Becker, "had been calm and dignified. He preserved unbroken silence in the carriage, where nothing was heard, but the respiration of the four persons who occupied it. He seemed depressed, bent down within himself, still dwelling upon the chances of a return of fortune, and lost in thoughts which were

Various propositions for his escape.

only revealed from time to time by a few words that escaped from his reveries."

The population of Rochefort, informed of his arrival by Gourgaud, who had preceded him, surrounded his residence in respectful silence, interrupted by generous acclamations, a consolation for his misfortunes. The two frigates which awaited him were at anchor in the roads, under the cannon of the Isle of Aix. The wind was unfavourable; and the English were cruising off the two channels of the roadstead. The naval commandants and the officers of the frigates were holding council at the prefecture, to deliberate on the possibility and the dangers of embarking and leaving the port. The chances, without being altogether desperate, seemed, however, great against it. Other expedients were considered—that of attempting on board a light vessel to evade the pursuit of the English squadron, or else to embark on board a Danish vessel, the captain of which offered the protection of his flag and the rapidity of his sailing. Finally, it was proposed to the Emperor to travel by land to Bordeaux, where the intrepid Captain Baudin proposed to receive him on board his frigate, *Bayadère*, and pledged his honour and his nautical skill to carry him to the United States.

Being himself present at these consultations, the Emperor adopted all the resolutions, made arrangements in consequence, then abandoned them for others, and suffered days to elapse, and decisions to fluctuate, according to the instability of his mind. Was this irresolution or calculation? Did he expect one last summons from Paris, or did he hesitate in putting the ocean between himself and his past glory? The impression on the mind of those who witnessed these last days, equally lost to his safety and his power, is, that he hoped against all hope, and that he expected to gain everything by procrastination.

XXIX

The government had replied to General Becker's despatch, written under the dictation of the Emperor: "Napoleon must embark without delay. If he had done this immediately on

Becker's orders from the government.

arriving, the maritime prefect of Rochefort writes us that his departure would not have been impossible. We therefore place his person under your responsibility. You must employ all forcible means that may be necessary, while maintaining the respect due to him. Cause him to embark immediately. As to the services he offers, our duty towards France, and our engagements with the foreign powers, do not permit us to accept them, and you must not again apply to us on the subject."

The stern impatience of the language of this despatch, signed by Caulaincourt and by Carnot, whose attachment to the Emperor was not to be doubted, sufficiently proves to what an excess of weariness his vacillation had reduced even his best friends. Friendship itself revolted against this blind importunity of hope. Davoust had written by the same courier to the general commanding the troops of the department, to assist Becker in forcing Napoleon to embark. The capitulation of Paris, concluded with the enemy on the same day, left the government no further power of temporising with the fallen Emperor.

Becker faithfully communicated these orders to the Emperor himself. "Well, then," said Napoleon to him, "what do you think of the matter?" "I am not in a position to give advice," replied the afflicted general. "The only counsel I can venture to give is to come to a prompt resolution, and to execute it without losing a moment. The destiny of France may be accomplished every instant, and the new government may send persons to execute new orders with respect to you; from that moment the powers which I hold from the provisional government will cease, and you may be threatened with unknown dangers." "But," replied Napoleon, with an inquiring glance at Becker, "in any case you would be incapable of delivering me up?" "You know," replied the general, "that I would give my life to ensure the safety of your flight; but the commandants of the frigates will be under the orders of Louis XVIII., and will not recognise mine." "Well, then," said the Emperor, "order the boats necessary for conveyance to the Isle of Aix."

The boats were accordingly hailed, and approached the

Napoleon lands on the Isle of Aix.

quay. The Emperor embarked in that of the frigate *La Saale*. A long farewell cry from the shore responded to the strokes of the oars which bore him from the main land. Both the wind and the sea were rough in the roads, and the passage from Rochefort to the Isle of Aix was long and wearisome. The Emperor, instead of landing on the island, went on board the *Saale* frigate, and fixed himself there for the night, with Bertrand, Becker, Savary, and Gourgaud.

It was eight o'clock in the evening, the hour at which Louis XVIII., who had been driven out by him on the 20th March, after having traversed Paris, amidst the acclamations of the people, who in him hailed the wished-for peace, installed himself once more in the palace of the Tuileries.

XXX.

At daybreak on the 9th, Napoleon landed at the Isle of Aix. The people and the regiment of marines in garrison hastened to the shore in crowds, eager to see him, and rending the air with their acclamations. His exile resembled a triumph, amidst this population of ships, coasts, and camps. The Emperor reviewed the regiment, and after going through the island, and tasting the last pleasures of command, he returned to his frigate. The maritime prefect waited on him there with final orders from the government for his embarkation. The act of disembarking him again upon the French territory was declared high treason. The Emperor still rejecting the adventurous offers of safety which were made to him by Captain Baudin, by the Danish captain, and by the young naval officers, who engaged to take him through the cruisers in a vessel fast-sailing but hazardous, resolved to go on board the *Bellerophon*, commanded by Captain Maitland, at anchor off the Isle of Oleron, with a brig, which composed the English cruising squadron there. He despatched M. de Las Cases on board to negotiate with Captain Maitland, and to ask a pledge of safety should the Emperor take refuge on board his vessel.

"I can enter into no engagement," said Captain Maitland

Result of Las Cases' interview with Captain Maitland.

"I shall make a report of our interview to Admiral Hotham, my superior officer, who is at anchor with the whole of the squadron in the neighbouring bay of Quiberon; and I will transmit you his answer." M. de Las Cases having demanded of Captain Maitland if he would allow the frigates to pass, or a neutral vessel having the Emperor Napoleon on board, the captain replied that he would attack the frigates if they were enemies; that he would take Napoleon prisoner, and that in the event of Napoleon being found in a neutral vessel, he would detain that vessel, and submit the fate of Napoleon to the decision of his government. He seemed to dread the idea of Napoleon's passage to the United States, and to throw out a hint to Las Cases of seeking an asylum in England; but in that case he presumed nothing as to the intentions of his government with respect to the freedom or the captivity of Napoleon.

XXXI.

Las Cases returned, and gave an account of this conversation to the Emperor, whom it appeared to discourage. The *Bellerophon* and the English brig approached immediately after the departure of Las Cases, and each took post at one of the two channels of the roads, to prevent the nocturnal flight of the frigates. The captain of the *Medusa*, one of the frigates, excited by the gravity of the circumstances, and by the greatness of the deposit confided to him, proposed forcing the passage during the night; in which case he would devote himself to the *Bellerophon*, and perish under its guns to prevent it from manœuvring, while the *Saale*, fighting and crushing the brig, should carry the Emperor off to sea. Napoleon declined an act of devotion which would sacrifice a whole crew to his flight, and passed the night in a state of prolonged indecision. He could not be ignorant that this indecision would result in the unavoidable capitulation of his person, since the entire squadron of Admiral Hotham, being warned by Captain Maitland, would profit by this very night to blockade the roads. He resumed, or pretended to resume, the idea of accepting the offer to cross the ocean in the *Bayadere*, and sent General Lallemand to

Napoleon is still undecided.

concert measures with Captain Baudin. At the same time he listened again to the proposition of the Danish captain. Some hours later he had his luggage and equipage put on board trading schooners to send them on board the English vessel, where he decided on going himself. On the evening of the same day he retraced his steps once more, and landed on the Isle of Aix, where he installed himself in the hotel of the director of engineers.

Days were passing quicker than his thoughts. Lallemand returned from the *Bayadère*, bringing a repetition of Captain Baudin's assurances and entreaties; but he was on shore and the shore held him back. He declined the offers of the captain of the *Bayadère*, which he had solicited a second time. He then appeared to accept the devotion of some young midshipmen, who asked him to equip two luggers, fishermen's vessels anchored in the roads, to bring them under shelter of the land, out of sight of the English cruisers, and take himself with them across the ocean. He purchased the two barks, appointed their crews, transhipped his baggage, and prepared apparently to embark in the night. At midnight, accordingly, Becker announced to the Emperor that all was ready: "I am ready to go," said the Emperor. He appeared in reality desirous of proceeding to the shore, but the tears and lamentations of the members of his suite, dispersed and separated as they would be from him in these little vessels, withheld him. Everybody exclaimed, "England!" "If such be your wish," said Napoleon, "well, then! we'll go to England!" A grain of sand made him stumble and change his resolution.

He gave one more night to the vague hope which had lulled him since his departure from Malmaison, but it brought him nothing more than a view of the white flag of the Bourbons, which was flying at Rochefort and on all the headlands of the coast. He sent Las Cases again, with Savary and Lallemand, to the *Bellerophon*. The captain told them that he was authorised by his government to receive Napoleon and his suite on board his ship; but that he could not guarantee either a safe conduct or a passport to go from England to the United States. "I see no guarantee in that," said Napoleon to his friends, on

the return of Lallemand. The Danish captain then entreated to have the preference. Napoleon took the opinions of all. With the exception of Lallemand all implored him to confide himself to British honour rather than incur the perils of the sea and of unknown and perhaps inhospitable shores, on which the waves might cast him far away from his friends. He yielded to persuasions evidently too conformable to his own resolutions, and shutting himself up in his chamber he wrote to the Prince Regent of England the following letter, wherein will be found, in the accents of Marius at Minturnæ, the appeal of a great soul struggling with the extremities of fate:

"Your Royal Highness,—A victim to the factions which distract my country, and to the enmity of the great powers of Europe, I have terminated my political career; and I come, like Themistocles, to throw myself upon the hospitality of the British people. I put myself under the protection of their laws, which I claim from your Royal Highness, as the most powerful, the most constant, and the most generous of my enemies.

"Rochefort, July 13, 1815."

"NAPOLEON.

Conceived as it was between the country which refused him a throne, and the ocean which refused him flight, this letter, the epitaph of his political life, was worthy of being inscribed on the last page of his downfall. It summed up with a calm and sorrowful majesty what he had been, and what he consented to become. The master of Europe, imploring the hospitality of the island which the ocean alone had preserved from his domination; it made an appeal to the honour and generosity of an enemy, which ought to have been listened to, if England had more highly appreciated the moral grandeur of its hospitality than the political safety of the world. England alone might have committed this generous imprudence; but she formed a part of the European crusade against the man who had subdued and reduced the continent to servitude. Greatness of soul may be expected from a court, never from a coalition. Collective acts are more implacable than individual

Gourgaud and Las Cases sent to England.

ones, because no one in particular bears the responsibility in the eyes of mankind. A statesman is sometimes guided by the dictates of his heart, a congress of kings or of nations solely by those of policy. Vengeance counselled reprisals, policy authorised the sovereigns and the nations to rely no more on the faith of a man who had violated his word by tearing the treaty of Fontainebleau, and returned, sword in hand, upon the soil and to the throne which he had renounced by that treaty.

It cannot be sufficiently deplored, for the dignity and the morality of history, that England did not magnanimously respond to the letter of Napoleon by granting him an asylum. True greatness is sovereign wisdom. We are never deceived by our virtues.

XXXII.

Gourgaud was commissioned to bear this letter to London. His instructions were to use every effort to obtain an audience of the Prince Regent, a personage of an indolent but honourable mind, of whom he was to ask for Napoleon a country residence at a short distance from London, promising, on the part of Napoleon, that he would engage to live there as a private individual; that he would take the name of Muiron, or of Daroc, two of his military companions whom he had loved and lost, and whose names he adopted with a fond remembrance, the proof of an honourable tenderness of soul. Further, that he would accept the superintendence of a commissioned officer stationed about him.

A second letter, addressed in the name of the Emperor to Captain Maitland by the marshal of the palace, Bertrand, acquainted this officer that Napoleon would go at four o'clock the next morning on board the *Bellerophon*. Gourgaud and Las Cases, the bearers of these letters, departed in the evening to deliver them to Captain Maitland. They were immediately put on board a light vessel which conveyed them towards the English coast, there to execute their mission.

The night of the 15th July was again full of irresolutions on the part of Napoleon, of anxieties, of doubts, and of solicitations to change his mind from his devoted mariners,

Napoleon embarks on board the *Bellerophon*.

who vowed to withdraw him secretly from the faithless asylum which he was demanding from his enemies. He was still in a state of hesitation when General Becker acquainted him with the arrival at Rochefort of M. de Bigny, captain of a frigate, and nephew of the Abbé Louis, direct from Ghent, whither he had followed the King, and now commissioned, it was said, to arrest Napoleon, if he prolonged any further his residence on a French island where he was an outlaw.

Napoleon dressed himself as if for one of the grand ceremonials of his life, and embarked with General Becker and his officers in a boat which immediately put him on board a French brig, prepared for his conveyance to the English squadron. Becker went on board the brig with him, and asked permission to accompany him to the very last step he should take on a French deck. "Do nothing of the kind, general," said the Emperor, with a delicacy of sentiment which attested the solicitude of a man of honour for the fame of his guardian, "Do nothing of the kind; we must be mindful of France. If you accompanied me to the *Bellerophon*, it might be thought that you had delivered me up to the English. It is entirely of my own free will that I go on board the English cruiser; I do not wish France to lie under the suspicion and appearance of such an act of treachery." Then, holding out his hand to Becker: "Embrace me, general," he said to him. "I thank you for all the care you have taken of me. I regret that I have not known you sooner. Farewell!" Becker, moved even to tears, embraced the Emperor, and wished him greater happiness than he left behind him.

XXXIII

The brig was speedily wafted towards the *Bellerophon*, where Napoleon was received by Captain Maitland, his officers and crew, with all the respect and etiquette due to his title, to his name, and to his misfortunes. The brig then departed, casting over the waves one last cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" The white flag was hoisted on all the ships in the roads, and the second Empire was at an end. Napoleon, from the poop

Reception of his letter to the Prince Regent.

of an English man of war, witnessed the disappearance, with his colours, of the last trace of his sovereignty, uncertain if the deck upon which he stood was an asylum or a prison.

Admiral Hotham, an officer of the most dignified mind and manners, a true type of the naval aristocracy of England both in features and sentiments, arrived a few moments after on board the *Bellerophon*. He requested permission of the Emperor, who had already retired to his cabin, to pay his respects to him, and conversed respectfully with him. On the following day he received Napoleon on board his flagship, with the honours due to a sovereign visiting his fleet. After this reception the Emperor returned to the *Bellerophon*, which immediately made sail for Torbay. He was there rejoined by Gourgaud, who had not been permitted to land for the purpose of accomplishing his mission to the Prince Regent. The *Bellerophon* anchored in Plymouth Sound, where the port Admiral Keith received the Emperor with the same respectful consideration which had been evinced for him in the squadron of Admiral Hotham. The curiosity of the English people to contemplate on board the vessel which bore the fugitive Emperor of the French, the monument of so great a vicissitude of fate, drew crowds of boats and craft around the *Bellerophon*, day and night. Their eagerness took the aspect of enthusiasm; for men are disposed to admire greatness when they cease to fear it. Napoleon was the spoil of England, and they were never weary of looking at him. The spectacle alone of such a marvel of fortune constitutes an era in life.

Napoleon's letter to the Prince Regent had been transmitted to London to the council of ministers. They did not recognise to themselves the right of deliberating alone on the fate of an enemy who had fallen into the power of Great Britain in consequence of the events of a war waged in common with their allies. They looked upon Napoleon as the captive of the coalition, merely thrown as a deposit into their hands; they therefore declined the responsibility of deciding between a state of captivity and an exercise of British hospitality. Necessity alone had thrown Napoleon, conquered, and without a footing on *terra firma*, upon the deck of one of their vessels. Had he surrendered on

Napoleon in Plymouth Sound.

the field of battle to a Russian, a Prussian, or an Austrian officer, would they themselves have recognised in the King of Prussia, the Emperor of Russia, or the Emperor of Austria, the right of disposing alone of the common enemy? Evidently not; they therefore referred the matter to their allies, who made the following declaration on the subject:

"Article I. Napoleon Bonaparte is regarded by the powers who signed the treaty of the 5th of March last, as their prisoner.

"Article II. He is specially confided to the guardianship of the British government.

"Article III. The allied powers will appoint commissioners, who will reside on the spot which may be assigned by the British government for the residence of Napoleon Bonaparte."

England, in thus accomplishing the duty of not disposing of a collective prisoner, undertook, nevertheless, three odious parts, with which its history will remain tainted in future times: that of delivering up to Europe a refugee, not taken on the field of battle, but a voluntary suppliant of its hospitality; that of keeping watch alone over his chains; and finally, that of assigning him his prison. England, the champion of the world, became its gaoler. She took upon herself the severity, the distance, and the maledictions of the captivity. Her glory is tarnished by it. A more generous hospitality might have been less honourable towards the allied powers, might have afforded less security for the present, but would have exhibited more humanity and more majesty in the page of history.

XXXIV.

Napoleon consumed the six days passed in Plymouth Sound in conjectures on his own fate, in gazing on the English coast, and in receiving impressions of his popularity so powerful in the minds of his enemies, shown by the avidity with which they sought a glance at his profile as he paced backwards and forwards on the poop of the *Bellerophon*. He measured his own greatness by their curiosity, and derived a sad enjoy-

His protest on being destined to St. Helena.

ment from this spectacle of himself. His mind resumed its serenity in this state of repose. He had reached the extremity of his ruin, but this ruin was still glorious.

On the 7th of August the *Bellerophon* brought him back to Torbay, where Admiral Cockburn awaited him on board the *Northumberland*. Here his sword was taken from him as from a prisoner of war. He became indignant, and blushed more for his enemies than for himself. The admirals blushed themselves, and respected this susceptibility of the warrior. Bertrand, Savary, Lallemand, and Gourgaud, his military companions and followers, were likewise disarmed. Before quitting the vessel, which had hitherto borne him and his friends, to go on board the *Northumberland*, Napoleon was obliged to part with some of his followers. Even Savary was taken from him, and he was only left Bertrand, Madame Bertrand, and their children; Las Cases and his son, M. and Madame Montholon, Gourgaud, and his most attached servants. He bade adieu to all the others, and receiving in that moment of emotion the tidings of the capitulation of Paris, shut himself up alone in his cabin, where he was heard to weep. The man, who had not shed a tear over the bodies of 400,000 men, strewing the snows of Russia with a continuous line of dead, over the disastrous battle of Leipsic, over the lost empire at Fontainebleau, or over Waterloo, the tomb of his last army, wept with shame on reading the details of the second occupation of Paris, and on tearing from his heart the small number of friends, companions of his exile, grudged him by the harshness of his enemies. He was already apprised that St. Helena was the place appointed for his future residence.

Having concealed his tears for a moment, though unable to stifle the noise of his sobs, he resumed the majesty of his misfortune, and went on board the *Northumberland*. There he gave utterance to the following protest, the first reprisal of his ill fortune, against the English government. It was his appeal to history, which is bound to record it.

"I hereby solemnly protest," he said, reading this act addressed to futurity—"I protest in the face of heaven and

Departure of the Northumberland.

mankind, against the violation of my most sacred rights, in forcibly disposing of my person and liberty. I came voluntarily on board the *Bellerophon*; I am not the prisoner, I am the guest of England.

"When once on board the *Bellerophon* I was entitled to the hospitality of the British people. If the government, in giving the captain of the *Bellerophon* orders to receive me and my followers, only wished to lay a snare, it has forfeited its honour, and disgraced its flag.

"If this act be consummated it will be in vain for the English henceforth, to talk of their sincerity, their laws, and liberties. British faith will have been lost in the hospitality of the *Bellerophon*.

"I appeal to history. It will say, that an enemy, who for twenty years made war against the English people, came spontaneously in the hour of misfortune to seek an asylum under their laws. What more striking proof could he give of his esteem and confidence? But how did England reply to such an act of magnanimity? It pretended to hold out a hospitable hand to this enemy; and on giving himself up with confidence he was immolated!

(Signed) NAPOLEON.

"*Bellerophon*, (at sea,) Friday, August 4, 1815 "

On the evening of the 8th August the *Northumberland* got under weigh and made sail for St. Helena. At daybreak the next morning the coast of France was still in sight. Napoleon gazed on it for a long time, and when at length it melted away in the distance, he exclaimed: "Farewell! land of the brave!" He then assumed the idle and careless life of a passenger on board ship during a voyage, which suspends all action, and lulls the thoughts to rest.

We shall now leave him progressing towards his island and towards the memory of his deeds, and resume the recital of events from which his great destiny has drawn us, with the unlimited power of human affairs, which never palpitate more effectually than in the heart of a great man vanquished and outliving his destiny.

BOOK TWENTY-NINTH.

Wellington after the Battle of Waterloo—His despatch to the Duke de Berry—His letter to Dumouriez—He enters France—His proclamation to the French people—He writes to the Duke de Feltre and to M. de Talleyrand—Entrance of Louis XVIII. into France—Conferences of Haguenau—Wellington's reply to the French Plenipotentiaries—Dismissal of M. de Blacas—Louis XVIII. at Cateau-Cambrésis—His proclamation to the French—He arrives at Cambray—Second proclamation to the French—Intrigues of Fouché with the Provisional Government in favour of the Bourbons—Davoust appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army—Efforts of Mesars. de Vitrolles and Ouvrard amongst the Chiefs of the Army—The Provisional Government orders M. de Vitrolles to be arrested—His Flight—Address of several generals to the Chamber of Representatives—Conference of the Chamber of Peers—Plenipotentiaries sent to Wellington and Blucher to negotiate an armistice—Conferences of the Plenipotentiaries with Wellington—Blucher crosses to the left bank of the Seine—Situation of France—Strength of the Army—Excellmans attacks and routs a corps of Prussian cavalry—Council of Government—Council of War at La Villette—It authorises Davoust to capitulate—Application of Davoust to Blucher—Blucher's reply—Fouché sends Colonel Macirone to Wellington, and General Tromelin to Blucher—Conferences at St. Cloud—Capitulation of Paris—Adoption of the Convention of St. Cloud by the Chamber of Representatives—Agitation of the people—Opposition of the Army—Entrance of the English and Prussians into Paris—The Chamber of Representatives—Vote of the Constitution—Interview between Wellington and Fouché at Neuilly—Presentation of Fouché to the King, Louis XVIII., by M. de Talleyrand—Conference—Nomination of Fouché to the Ministry of Police—Composition of the Ministry—Interview between Louis XVIII. and M. de Chateaubriand—Conferences of the Provisional Government—Occupation of the Tuileries, and expulsion of the Commission by Blucher—Dispersion of the Chamber of Peers—M. Decazes shuts up the Chamber of Representatives—Impotence of Lafayette—Interview between Carnot and Fouché.

I.

THE evening before the battle of Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington, anticipating that a more successful result would

Wellington's letters and proclamation.

attend Napoleon's attack upon the forest of Soignies, and already preparing an eventual retreat of his own army, which would have laid open Brussels and Ghent, had written to the Duke de Berry, to induce Louis XVIII. to quit Ghent at the first signal. At that residence of the King all was distrust and uncertainty; for they had been so much accustomed to the triumphs of Napoleon that neither the still unknown genius of Wellington, nor the fiery bravery of Blucher could restore confidence to the fugitive court. The King prepared himself with resignation to carry still farther, and perhaps beyond the seas, his tent and his government. The noise of the cannon had resounded the whole day of the 18th June even upon the heights in the vicinity of Ghent. Sinister tidings spread at Brussels by the fugitive English camp followers, which reached with customary exaggerations the ears of the King and the princes, had made of this day, which restored to them both country and throne, a day of anguish, of panic, and despair. Their fate was deciding at a distance sufficiently near for them to experience all its attendant emotions, but too remote to become acquainted with its vicissitudes. Wellington, however, hastened during the night which followed the battle to reassure them. He wrote with his own hand to the Duke de Berry, commander-in-chief of the little army of the King at Alost, announcing the victory. "As I expect to pass the frontier to-morrow," wrote the victorious general, "I beg of your Royal Highness to advance and join us. I write also to the King to request him to put himself in motion by the same route."

On the same night he wrote to General Dumouriez, that old French deserter, who closely watched the war against his country, and to whom Wellington gave an account of his successes, as a scholar to a master in the art of war. "You will learn what I have done," he said, "and I hope you will be satisfied. I have never witnessed such a battle, nor gained such a victory, and I hope we have done with Bonaparte! We are going to pursue him while he lives."

The following day he addressed a proclamation to the French people on crossing the frontier, to announce to them that he was entering at the head of a victorious army, not as an

His letter to M. de Talleyrand.

enemy but a liberator, and to assist them in throwing off the yoke of the enemy of the human race, with whom no one could have either truce or peace. He recommended the most scrupulous discipline to his army.

The Duke also wrote to the Duke de Feltre, minister of war to Louis XVIII. at Ghent, to urge the King, whose presence was very necessary, to follow his steps, and to present himself to the French people, who were imploring his return and his mediation. "We already find," he said, "the white flag flying in the towns and villages. The defeat of Napoleon's army is more decisive than was at first imagined. The soldiers are going in bodies to their homes, the cavalry and artillery are selling their horses in the country they pass through, the infantry are throwing away their arms and dispersing to return to their dwellings. There are more than 2,000 muskets to be picked up in the forest of Mormal."

He summoned the officers commanding garrisons, and the general who occupied Cambray, to surrender their arms to the King of France. Finally, pre-occupied himself, as much as the ministers of Louis XVIII., with the apprehension of a difference of opinion amongst the allied powers as to restoring the throne to the King, he wrote to M. de Talleyrand from Cateau-Cambrésis, where that prince had arrived immediately after him.

"The King has arrived, and has been received by the inhabitants with the transports of joy that I expected. I am sorry you have not accompanied the King here: it is I who have anxiously entreated his Majesty to enter France with us, because I was desirous, by his presence, of giving to the battle of Waterloo all the results it ought to have; and because, foreseeing that his Majesty would encounter a serious crisis in the recovery of his throne, above all, when we should approach Paris, I wished the King to be as near as possible to the scene which was to decide his fate. I do not doubt that if you had known the considerations which have directed me in this matter, you would, instead of advising the King at Mons not to enter France, have given his Majesty a different counsel."

In another letter, the Duke of Wellington more clearly

Conferences at Haguenau.

expressed his apprehension, if Louis XVIII. did not hasten to resume his rights as a sovereign, taking the crown by his own will and that of his people, that Austria, Prussia, and Russia might abandon the cause of the legitimate sovereign, and transfer his right to some other prince of the house of Bourbon, or of the family of Napoleon.

The King, deaf to the counsels of M. de Talleyrand, and heeding only those of the Duke of Wellington, advanced with his little court and army towards Cambray. He was received everywhere as the natural mediator between the people and the foreign powers. Independent of the Royalist sentiments, more developed in the north and west than in the centre of France, and which urged the people forward to receive him, the instinct of public safety predominated over the negociations of all parties, and evidently invited this prince a second time to pacify and preserve the soil from the reprisals of Europe. Nothing could resist this general current of opinion and good sense in France. The tangled web of the 20th of March unravelled itself everywhere on the approach of the King. At Paris only, the centre of all intrigues and all factions, Napoleonist, Orleanist, military, or parliamentary, there were still some difficulties to be solved.

II.

Lafayette, Sebastiani, and Laforêt, the plenipotentiaries appointed by Fouché to go to the head-quarters of the allied powers to pursue the shadow of a negociation, the meaning of which we have before explained, obtained nothing but evasive respect and procrastination. At Haguenau, the temporary residence of the two emperors and the King of Prussia, these sovereigns had eluded the audiences demanded by the envoys. M. de Lafayette, who reckoned on his name, and on some personal intercourse which he had had the year before with the Emperor Alexander, at the house of Madame de Staël, attempted in vain to renew it, with the view of drawing him into some ill-defined plan of modified empire, or of royalty impaired by the illegitimacy of the crown. Alexander refused

Wellington's reply to the French negotiators.

to see him. The sovereigns contented themselves with naming commissioners, before whom the French plenipotentiaries were to be admitted to produce the bases of their negotiations. These conferences, which were only a diversion for Fouché, were also nothing more on the part of the allied powers than an act of aimless complaisance. They were consumed in idle conversations, in which they spoke of the throne of France for Napoleon II., for the Duke d'Orleans, for the Prince of Orange, or for the King of Saxony. These chimeras of the Bonapartist party, who only sought to avoid a total contradiction of the revolution of the 20th of March, did not even obtain the honour of a serious refutation. If it was humiliating to the Bonaparte faction, or the enemies of the Bourbons, again to receive Louis XVIII., imposed upon them by necessity and by victory, but accepted by the opinions of a majority of the people, it was a thousand times more shameful to solicit from the complaisance of the sovereigns who had conquered Bonaparte, a foreign prince unknown to the country M. de Lafayette, and M. de Laferêt, exhibited in these conferences as little political good sense as of real national spirit. Sebastiani appeared better to appreciate the force and propriety of circumstances. "The French people," he said, "are still free in their choice; they have pronounced for nothing; they only ask for peace, and the re-establishment of friendly relations with the rest of Europe." The conferences, after these short ramblings of mere words, were put an end to by the English commissioner, who, in concert with his colleagues, declared that he had no power to stipulate anything.

III

The Duke of Wellington replied with more politeness, but also with more frankness, to such of the plenipotentiaries as had been directed to his head quarters, and to that of Blücher. He did not dissemble from them, that in his opinion the first condition of any armistice, or of any negotiation, was the recognition of the rights of Louis XVIII., expelled from the throne by a conquered faction, and re-entering with full rights

Dismissal of M. de Blacas

into his power on the ruins of that faction. Nevertheless, already agreeing in everything with M. de Talleyrand and with Fouché, who corresponded every day with him, and who were desirous of obtaining from the King the dismissal of M. de Blacas, and the appointment of a ministry more national and more in the interest of their party, the Duke readily acknowledged to the plenipotentiaries that the King had committed some errors in 1814, that he had not surrounded himself with statesmen sufficiently characterised by their constitutional spirit; he assured them also that on returning to Paris this prince would freely give all the pledges compatible with the dignity of the throne. With respect to the insinuation of the partisans of the Duke d'Orleans, the Duke of Wellington replied, that to place this prince upon the throne would be to give the lie to every principle of hereditary right which regulated all the monarchies in Europe; and that in the eyes of England he would be nothing but another Napoleon without his glory, and an usurper possessed of royal blood.

IV

During these vain attempts at negotiation, the King advanced slowly in rear of the armies of Wellington and Blucher. Before he placed his foot upon the French soil he had at length separated from M. de Blacas, that devoted but dreaded favourite, whose unpopularity would have excited between France and the King an ill-timed antipathy. It was with difficulty, however, that M. de Chateaubriand and his friends, M. de Talleyrand, Fouché, and their agents, even the Duke of Wellington himself, could obtain from the King this sacrifice to necessity. The separation, which was painful to the King, was smoothed to the favourite by titles and largesses to the amount of seven or eight millions of francs. M. de Blacas proved himself worthy of these benefactions of his master, by laying his fortune, the gift of the royal hand, at the feet of Charles X., dethroned and poor during his last exile. Louis XVIII. was scarcely delivered from the dangerous presence of M. de Blacas in his council when he published at Cateau-

First proclamation of Louis XVIII.

Cambr sis the royal proclamation which summoned his people once more around him.

"From the period," said the King, "when the most criminal of enterprises, seconded by the most inconceivable defection, constrained us for awhile to quit our kingdom, we have apprised you of the dangers which threatened you if you did not hasten to break the yoke of the tyrant usurper.

"We have felt no desire to unite our arms or those of our family with the instruments chosen by Providence to punish the treason. But now that the powerful efforts of our allies have scattered the satellites of the tyrant, we hasten to return to our kingdom, to re-establish therein the constitution that we have given to France, to repair, by all the means that are in our power, the evils caused by the revolt, and by the war which was the necessary consequence of it; to recompense the good, and to execute the existing laws against the guilty: finally, to recall around our paternal throne the vast majority of the French people, whose fidelity, courage, and devotion have brought such sweet consolation to our heart.

"Given at Cateau-Cambr sis, the 25th June, 1815, and the twenty-first year of our reign.

(Signed) "LOUIS."

The spirit of M. de Blacas was still visible in this imprudent proclamation, drawn up by the King and by his chancellor M. Dambray. The resentment couched in the words might urge the Chambers, the army, and the numerous accomplices of the 20th March into despair, by the prospect of punishment with which the prince impolitically threatened them. Amnesty is the first condition of reconciliations between a king and his people. A conqueror would scarcely have had the right to speak in such terms. Louis XVIII. was only a vanquished man brought back by a foreign victory. His part was, therefore, to present himself as the intercessor and not the executioner of Europe. This ill-advised proclamation slackened the movement which was drawing all around him.

more conciliatory.

V.

The King arrived at Cambray, the gates of which were opened to him by the people, in spite of the resistance of the garrison. He entered it by the triumphal breach which the love of the people, and the frenzy of the women and children had made for him, and which young maidens strewed with flowers. He found there his whole ministry, who freed him from all recollection of the policy of M. de Blacas, and who induced him to issue a proclamation to the French people, more able and more paternal than the last.

"The gates of my kingdom," said the King, "fly open before me. I hasten to place myself a second time between the French people and the allied armies, in the hope that the feelings of consideration of which I may be the object will tend to the preservation of my subjects. This is the only way in which I have wished to take part in the war. I have not suffered any prince of my family to appear in foreign ranks, and I have restrained the courage of those of my servants who had been able to range themselves around me.

"Returned to my native country, I feel a peculiar pleasure in speaking confidence to my people. When I re-appeared amidst them before, I found men's minds heated and carried away by conflicting passions. My views encountered difficulties and obstacles on every side. My government, therefore, was liable to commit errors; perhaps it did commit them. There are times when the purest intentions are insufficient to direct, and sometimes they even mislead. Experience alone can teach; it shall not be thrown away; all that can save France is my wish.

"My subjects have learned, by cruel experience, that the principle of the legitimacy of sovereigns is one of the fundamental bases of social order; the only one upon which, amidst a great nation, a wise and rational liberty can be established. This doctrine has just been proclaimed as that of all Europe. I had previously consecrated it by my charter, and I will add to that charter every guarantee which can secure its benefits

Proclamation issued by the King.

"The unity of the ministry is the strongest that I can offer. I design that it should exist, and that the frank and firm march of my council should guarantee all interests, and calm all troubles.

"Some persons have spoken of the re-establishment of tithes and feudal rights. This fable, invented by the common enemy, needs no refutation. It will not be expected that the King of France should stoop to repel calumnies and lies. The success of the treason has too clearly indicated their source. If the purchasers of national property have felt alarm, the charter should suffice to re-assure them. Did I not, myself, propose to the Chambers, and cause to be executed, sales of such property? This proof of my sincerity is incontrovertible.

"In these latter times my subjects of all classes have given me unequivocal proofs of their love and fidelity. I wish them to know how sensibly I feel them, and that it is from among all Frenchmen I shall delight to choose those who are to approach my person and my family.

"I wish to exclude from my presence none but those whose celebrity is matter of grief to France, and of horror to Europe. In the plot which they contrived I perceive several of my subjects to have been misled, and some guilty.

"I promise—I who never promised in vain, as all Europe can witness—to pardon misled Frenchmen all that has transpired from the day I quitted Lille amidst so many tears, up to the day when I re-entered Cambray amidst so many acclamations.

"But the blood of my people has flowed in consequence of a treason unprecedented in the annals of the world. That treason has summoned foreigners into the heart of France. Every day reveals to me a fresh disaster. I owe it, therefore, to the dignity of my crown, to the interest of my people, and to the repose of Europe, to exempt from pardon the authors and instigators of this horrible plot. They shall be delivered over to the vengeance of the laws by the two Chambers which I propose forthwith to assemble.

"Frenchmen! such are the sentiments which he brings among you whom time has not been able to change, nor calamities, fatigues, nor injustice made to stoop.

Intrigues of Fouché in favour of the Bourbons.

"The King, whose fathers have reigned for ages over yours, returns to devote the remainder of his days to your defence and consolation.

"Given at Cambray the 28th day of the month of June, the year of grace 1815, and of our reign the twenty-first.

(Signed) "LOUIS."

VI

This manifesto displayed the insinuating spirit of M. de Talleyrand, the royalist magnanimity of M. de Chateaubriand, and the majestic style of the King himself. Having been concerted also with Fouché, whose emissaries succeeded each other under various disguises around the prince, it produced an immense impression on the public mind in favour of the King. His promises rendered all averse to resistance, except three or four great culprits of the 20th March, for whom the irritated nation did not feel disposed to sacrifice its existence, or to postpone its pacification.

The marshals and generals who had continued faithful to the King's cause during the second reign of Napoleon, hastened to meet him. Macdonald, Oudinot, and Gouvion St. Cyr were already at Cambray. The remains of the army which had fallen back upon Paris, and the Chambers within the walls of the capital, were alone opposed to the complete restoration of the Bourbons. Fouché still pretending to negotiate with the enemy, in reality negotiated with the Chambers. But embarrassed by his colleagues in the government, he reckoned on the pressure of the public danger to assist him to triumph over the obstacles which surrounded him, and to urge that royalist cry which was still restrained by a dread of the army in Paris. If, on the one hand, this minister, thrown into the midst of so many perils, was impatiently wishing to have done with the wrecks of Napoleon, on the other he was not sorry that the prolongation and complication of these difficulties, increased even by the nature of things under the footsteps of Louis XVIII. added more importance and more value to the services

he wished to render to him, in order to redeem his unpardonable regicide in the heart of the King, and to secure a large portion of power, after his second accession.

VII.

He sounded the government several times on the subject of proclaiming the Bourbons. These hints being unfavourably received by the majority of his colleagues, and above all, by Carnot, who wished to have some pledges of freedom in exchange for the throne restored to the King, Fouché was compelled to await a more critical moment. The first condition of liberty for Paris was the removal of the army, which was filled with the creatures of Napoleon, and which, by fraternising with the Chambers, the fédérés, and the faubourgs, might bury Paris beneath its own ruins. Fouché, certain of the firmness, the discretion, and the prudence of Marshal Davoust, caused him to be appointed generalissimo of the protecting army. Davoust was too much of a soldier to excite the suspicion of the army, and too patriotic to sacrifice that army and the capital to a paroxysm of rage against the Bourbons, and to a posthumous devotion to Napoleon.

He established his head-quarters at La Villette, where Grouchy, with all the chiefs, and all the corps of the army of the north, collected around him; but with the enemy increasing in front, Paris distracted and fluctuating behind them, this was a situation that demanded negotiation rather than a battle. Fouché was constantly insinuating this, more or less obscurely, to the marshal, who was sufficiently inclined to it himself, as well as the generals and subordinate officers. The most difficult to convince in appearance, evidently sought only to make the best conditions. The numerous vicissitudes of their military lives had made them so pliable to events that, their honour being safe, not one of them would expose himself in a desperate opposition to fortune. They were only restrained by that silent sense of shame which, in imperious, but grievous circumstances, prevents everyone from taking the initiative and responsibility of a resolution secretly desired by all. The

Carnot's suspicions of Fouché.

head-quarters of the marshal were besieged by semi-official counsellors, secret agents, negotiators avowed or disavowed by the King, by M. de Talleyrand, by Fouché, who mingled in the conversations of the generals, and used every effort to incline them to capitulation. Amongst these was M. de Vitrolles, a man very adroit in introducing himself everywhere, and who knew how far he might venture to go with characters moved by self-interest; M. Ouvrard also, one of the most adventurous seekers of fortune under the Directory, who knew the influence of public affairs upon money, and of money upon public affairs. All these men, some through interest, others through opinion, urged the generals to bend to circumstances. The majority of good citizens spoke the same language to the army. What end could it answer to persist in a military antipathy against the Bourbons, when Napoleon was vanquished, dethroned, and a fugitive, already perhaps on his way to the new world; and when the capital and the country had nothing more to give than their ashes to feed the fanaticism for his name?

VIII.

Carnot suspected Fouché of prompting the country, through the mouths of these men, with the name of Louis XVIII., and thus losing the concessions which he still hoped to draw from the monarchy. Provoked by some Bonapartist representatives in the Assembly who wished to dispute the entrance of the King into Paris, and who, in an undertone, accused Fouché of treason, Carnot at length broke out in the council against the manœuvres of which the head-quarters of the army were the focus, and against the intervention of M. de Vitrolles, the avowed agent of the royalists, the insurrectionist of Toulouse, who had been imprisoned for that act, but was now free, and corrupting the generals with impunity when he ought to be shut up in the dungeons of Vincennes. "Yes," he exclaimed, "this man is conspiring for Louis XVIII., and he is, perhaps, not the only one," he added, casting into the eyes of his colleague one of those glances which terminate a sentence. "Do

Military address to the Chambers.

you mean to say that I conspire with him?" demanded Fouché, affecting an assurance which Carnot's summons had for a moment disturbed. "If so, speak out, and accuse me before the Chamber! There is nothing to prevent you, but I shall defend myself." Carnot, as prompt in disavowing his suspicion as he had been bold in uttering it, said that he did not accuse his colleague of a guilty complicity with this royalist agent; but that this man corrupted even the generalissimo himself, and he was very desirous of sending him to prison again. "What!" exclaimed Fouché, derisively; "you also suspect even Marshal Davoust himself! Him, at least, it will be difficult to arrest; go and seize him, if you dare, in the midst of his army!"

Fouché opposed the arrest of M. de Vitrolles. Canlaincourt, having some personal connections with this agent of Louis XVIII., declined voting; the majority, however, decided on the arrest, but Fouché having apprised his agent, the latter, by that means, escaped a few days' imprisonment. Carnot, careless and silent, appeared to content himself with this puerile satisfaction afforded to his suspicions, and yielded once more, though with a murmur, under the ascendancy of Fouché and the progress of events.

IX.

A small number of excited generals alone, of all the army, were indignant at the visible appearance of the negotiations which were concocting between Davoust, Grouchy, and the foreign armies. Generals Dejean, Freissinet, and some of the colonels and officers of the army, signed an address to the Chambers, to protest against the return of the Bourbons. This address, communicated to Davoust, and sent to the Chamber of Representatives, was read there by Dupont (de l'Eure). Generals Pajol, Freissinet, d'Erlon, Roguet, Harlet, Pelet, Christian, Brunet, Chasteau, Vandamme, and Ambert had signed it. Davoust himself, not to break with his generals, had consented to put his name to it. "The Bourbons offer no guarantee to France; we are ready to die against them,"

Consultation in the Chamber of Peers.

said this address, which was a sort of renewed oath of the 20th of March.

It received some vain applause from the Bonapartist or military parties of the Assembly; but it changed nothing in the necessities of the moment, before which words were no longer availing. The march of events left the Chambers behind them. Marshal Davoust himself had only signed this protest that he might not lose his influence with his comrades. Grouchy, by his orders and those of Fouché, negotiated for an armistice; everybody negotiated but nobody wished to have the appearance of doing so. People closed their eyes to the parleying that was going on between the two armies and the two causes. Marshal Ney, Marshal Grouchy, and Marshal Mortier being consulted by the Chamber of Peers on the possibility of prolonging the defence of Paris, after the taking of the village of Aubervilliers by the troops of Blücher, replied that a capitulation was indispensably called for by the laws of civilized warfare, if it was not wished to give up the capital to the assault and ravage of an irresistible enemy. The Chamber convinced, but still restrained by the protests of some generals, less sincere, or more desperate in their cause, awaited; nevertheless, the result of another negotiation opened by M. Bignon. This minister, who carried the illusions of diplomacy into the realities of war, had sent plenipotentiaries to the Duke of Wellington and to Blücher, to ask them for an armistice after the failure of Lafayette and of Sebastiani. These diplomatic plenipotentiaries, Andréossy, Valence, Boissy d'Anglas, Flaugergues, and Labesnardiere, were instructed to propose, as an insurpassable limit for both armies, a line distant twenty leagues from the capital. This line of demarcation, arbitrarily traced upon the map by the minister in his cabinet, was only defended by the finger of the diplomatist. Blücher crossed it with contempt, and refused to listen to plenipotentiaries who had nothing but words to oppose to 200,000 men, conquerors, and in a state of exasperation. He would scarcely permit them, save out of consideration for his English allies, to pass through his advanced posts, and a portion of his army, to go to the head quarters of his colleague Wellington.

Wellington's report to his government.

X.

Wellington reported to his government the following account of his conference with them: "I have received the five commissioners sent from Paris to ask me for a suspension of hostilities. I told them that I could not in the present state of affairs, look upon any attempt to negotiate with us but as a snare; and that to suspend my operations would be to betray our allies. They told me they had every reason to believe that Napoleon had definitively quitted Paris, and that in case he should persist in remaining at Malmaison there were many ways of getting rid of him, either by sending him to England, or confiding him to the Emperor of Austria, his father-in-law. I replied that I had no power to decide between these several parties; but that, if he was sent to England, I did not doubt that the Prince Regent would consider it his duty to place him at the disposal of his allies.

"They then told me they thought he was already at Rochefort, or embarked for America, and asked if, in case this departure should be accomplished, I would consent to suspend my march upon Paris. I replied that, independent of the presence of Napoleon, there were the adherents of his cause who had declared war against the allies, and that before I could suspend a single operation prudence required that I should first see established in France the outline at least of a government, which should give some pledges of security for the peace of Europe. They requested me to indicate to them the wishes of the allies on this subject, to which I replied that I had no title whatever to speak on this matter, either in the name of England or of the allies; but that my private and personal opinion was, that there would be no security for Europe, or for France, but in the restoration of the King; that any other system would inevitably give birth to fresh causes of war; that there was even more true dignity for the French in restoring without conditions their fugitive King, than to impose oblogs upon him which would retard the peace, and embarrass his constitutional intentions. They all pro-

Wellington's advice to the French negotiators.

fessed before me their individual convictions that the recall of the King could alone obviate the present calamities. They assured me that the re-establishment of Louis XVIII. was at bottom the wish of the provisional government itself; and that this government and the Chambers had only proclaimed for the moment Napoleon II. to lull and conciliate the soldiers who had taken refuge in Paris in such great numbers after the battle of Waterloo, because a sedition amongst them, causing a civil war, was apprehended. They also asked me whether a regency conducting the affairs of the government in the name of Napoleon II. was likely to satisfy the allies. I energetically replied I did not think it would. Finally, they asked me what would be the case if any other prince of a royal house were called to the throne of France? I declined discussing these hypotheses, and referred them to what I had already said on the subject.

"They further followed me to my head-quarters at Louvres, where they renewed their questions as to offering the throne to any other prince than their King. I replied more categorically, that I saw no pledge of peace for France, or for the security of Europe, but in Louis XVIII. The commissioners replied that they perfectly understood me; and some of them added, in allusion to the opinion I had expressed, 'You are perfectly right.'

"Finally, on the third day, having acquainted me with the departure of Napoleon for the United States, and interrogated me on what should be done as a preliminary to peace, I informed them that the principal obstacle to an armistice being removed, the most fitting step to be taken, in my opinion, would be to withdraw the French army behind the Loire, and to confide Paris to the National Guard. I added, that if they agreed to these terms, I would intercede with my colleague Blücher, to induce him to suspend his march and further hostilities. They made objections to the retreat of the army behind the Loire, although they had told me two evenings before that the presence of the army at Paris had been the only motive which had induced the government and the Chambers to proclaim Napoleon II. I replied that, as long as a

Real strength, of the French army.

single soldier remained in Paris I would not suspend my operations; and, in fact, if they consented to restore Louis XVIII. to his throne, this prince, surrounded in Paris by the army and the Chambers, would be at the mercy of Napoleon's creatures, and the instrument of their designs."

XI

M. Bignon's plenipotentiaries re-entered Paris at the moment that Blücher had turned the capital and crossed to the left bank of the Seine. The city, but weakly fortified on both banks, had nothing to defend it but the wrecks of Waterloo; reduced by desertion and discouragement to about 20,000 men of all arms, the army of Grouchy reduced to 30,000 combatants, some dépôts of troops which had not yet been in the field, some handfuls of volunteers and fédérés, fit only to fight behind entrenchments, many pieces of cannon, and but few artillery men, generals at variance in interests and opinions, and distrusting one another, marshals, some of whom were hastening to join the King, and others wishing in their hearts to treat, while affecting however, an inclination still to fight, to satisfy their soldiers; the most distinguished of them loudly confessing in their conversation, and in their reports to the Chambers, that the struggle, henceforth without object by the abdication of the Emperor, would only result in the capture of Paris, the massacre of the last remaining bastions, the fruitless and hopeless sacrifice of the capital and the country, to a shadow of empire that was flying fast, and of which victory even could not recover possession.

The historians of the 20th of March, who have since enumerated with great complacency the imposing forces rallied under the walls of Paris, estimating them at 110,000 men, have taken figures for men in the military statements which they have consulted. The army no longer existed, save in a nucleus of 50,000 or 60,000 combatants around Paris, to protect the government and the Chambers in the city, to defend the walls, and hold possession of the country against 300,000 men,

Blucher sends a corps of cavalry to Versailles.

already covering both banks of the Seine, and against 450,000 more daily arriving from the Alps and the Rhine, through Champagne and Burgundy.

The south was rising everywhere in insurrection for the Bourbons, who were idolised by the population in those provinces. The west was flying to arms, and organising itself under royalist chiefs, to combat at the same time the troops of Bonaparte, and to oppose the entrance of foreigners into their country. The north was opening all its fortified places to the King himself, and Paris awaited him with impatience. What, therefore, could some thousands of men, even if they were conquerors, do against three-fourths of all France, and against the whole of Europe under the walls of Paris?—Exasperate the final victors, and pour to the shade of Napoleon one more libation of blood. Such historians write to console a party, not to bear witness to facts. For the interest of the country the army was bound to preserve itself for France and for the King, by sheltering itself behind the Loire, and by ceasing to deny peace to the nation and the throne to Louis XVIII. The most heroic warriors, the most experienced, and the most compromised in the events of that epoch, Soult, Davoust, Grouchy, Oudinot, Massena, and Ney himself, were unanimously of this opinion. By what right do those party writers accuse such masters in the art of war of inexperience, and such brave men of cowardice? In their fanaticism for the Emperor they even sacrifice his most intrepid generals

XII

Davoust was resolved on treating; but, desirous of honouring the negotiation by a feat of arms, to keep the Prussians in check a few days longer, availed himself of a temerity of Blucher, who had ventured one of his corps of cavalry as far as Versailles, by crossing the Seine at St. Germain. He accordingly ordered General Excelmans, who longed for exploits, even after the annihilation of his hopes, to attack with 1,500 cavalry the corps of Blucher at Versailles, and drive it back upon the Seine, and into that river. This little exploit swept

It is overthrown by Excelmans.

the left bank of the river for a few days longer, giving more time for the negotiations, and teaching some respect to the enemy. Excelmans was a man admirably chosen for its execution. He was the Murat of the army of Paris. Brought up in the school of the King of Naples, his friend Excelmans had his rapidity and his chivalry in heart and hand. Davoust had promised to support him with two corps of infantry, which he ordered to recross the Seine for this expedition. Excelmans having divided his cavalry into two columns, advanced upon Versailles at the head of the first. The second, commanded by General Vichery, diverged upon Roquencourt, in order to take the Prussians in flank when Excelmans should have attacked them in front. The Prussians, who had already quitted Versailles, to spread themselves over the plains of Paris on the left of the Seine, were encountered by the column of Excelmans in the hollow roads of the forest of Verrieres. The attack of the general was terrible; his regiments, animated by a chief who fought himself at the head of his squadrons, sabred the Prussians into the very streets of Versailles, and throwing them back upon Roquencourt, where the column of Vichery awaited them, destroyed them to the very last man. Being then free in his movements, and thinking he formed the advance-guard of the two corps of infantry promised by Davoust, Excelmans, with his two columns, reunited and victorious, galloped towards St. Germain to push the remainder of Blucher's corps into the Seine. But at Marly he came alone into collision with Blucher's masses of infantry, which occupied the surrounding hills. The corps of infantry which had been pushed forward in the morning by Davoust had been countermanded. Fouché, being informed of these hostile operations against the armies with which he was in negotiation, had energetically blamed this rashness, which was useless for defence and fatal to peace. Davoust, being convinced, had yielded. The heroism of Excelmans only adorned with closing bloodshed, and a final lustre, the unavoidable capitulation.

United council of war and of government.

XIII.

Carnot, the most military member of the government, made an inspection himself of the fortifications and the troops. He declared before the council of war, assembled and united with the government council, that it was certainly possible to sweep for a moment the left bank of the river of the Prussians, who were beginning to overspread it; but that this success would be momentary, and that when joined by the English army they would soon recross the river in irresistible force and numbers. The inferences drawn from his report were discouraging, though bitter against the military chiefs. Fouché, being interrogated by Dupont de l'Eure on the state of the negotiations, declared that the allies were for imposing Louis XVIII. on them, and that Europe was determined to have the Bourbons at all hazards; that to refuse them would be to authorise the iron yoke which these princes, supported by Europe against the powerless army, wished to impose upon the country; that to receive them, under national and constitutional conditions, would be to save at once the capital, the nation, and their freedom; that stipulations would be made with them for the army, for the Chambers, and for the men compromised in the 20th of March, who would thus be shielded by an amnesty in a capitulation. These words, supported by Masséna and by Soult, who unanimously affirmed that the defence of Paris was beyond all human power, gave a motive to the conviction of the ministers, the representatives, and the military men present at this deliberation.

One alone, Marshal Lefèvre, an old soldier, expressed an opinion as to the possibility of defending, at least for a few days longer, the left bank of the river. Fouché, pretending to yield to the marshal's scruples of honour, ordered a council of war to assemble at La Villette, in the quarters of the generalissimo, to decide finally on the defensive situation of Paris.

Davoust authorised to treat for a capitulation.

XIV.

This council of war, composed of all the marshals present at Paris, assembled in the night at the head-quarters of La Villette. Soult maintained that the political situation of the country was paramount to the military question; that to prolong the defence of Paris for a few days more or less would only be time given to a more extensive irruption of the foreign armies upon the soil of France, and around the capital. He recognised frankly and resolutely the necessity of rallying around Louis XVIII., if it were not wished that the fall of Napoleon should occasion the ruin and dismemberment of the country. Davoust, Grouchy, and even Vandamme, supported with a sorrowful but stern conviction the prudent and politic opinions of Marshal Soult. "Sound sense," they all exclaimed in turn, "prompts us, and prompts all France, that there is no safety but in the King, whose wisdom and moderation constitute the best treaty." Some young generals, amongst those who earnestly longed for Napoleon II., in their fanaticism for his father, and not to belie their recent enthusiasm, opposed some vague objections. Military men in France are heroic soldiers in causes still on foot—rarely martyrs to those that are fallen. The council replied, that there was no hope in a battle, and no guarantee for Paris in case of a prolonged defence under its walls.

Fouché, Carnot, Grenier, Caulaincourt, and Quinette, armed with this deliberation of the chiefs of the army, which covered their responsibility to the Chamber, authorised Davoust the same night to conclude a capitulation. It was in vain that the orators of the Napoleon party in the Chamber murmured some imprecations against the necessity of the case, and some insinuations of treason against Fouché; the latter, shielded by the revolutionary and military authority of Carnot and the marshals, braved their murmurs.

Davoust sent a flag of truce to the army of Blücher, who replied with the brutality of a barbarian, that he would listen to no proposal of peace until the army had laid down its arms.

Capitulation of Paris.

He insulted Davoust in his replies, by gross and calumnious insinuations respecting depredations unjustly attributed to this officer at Hamburg, while executing the orders of Napoleon, against the navy and commerce of the Hanseatic Towns.

XV

Fouché, who corresponded with the English general by the intervention of his confidant, Colonel Macirone, an Italian, formerly aide-de-camp of Murat, requested Wellington to intercede with Blücher and incline him to negotiate. Wellington wrote to the Prussian general that it would be rash in them alone to invest Paris on all sides; and that an armistice was their best military measure, to give time to the Russian and Austrian armies to come up to their assistance. Blücher, influenced by his colleague, and by another negociator of Fouché, General Tromelin, agreed to a suspension of arms, on condition that the French army should retire to a distance of forty leagues from Paris. Wellington crossed over to the left bank of the Seine, at Argenteuil, to strengthen Blücher during these negociations. The chateau of St. Cloud, Napoleon's palace of repose after his triumphs, was appointed by the two generals for the place of conference. M. Bignon, minister of foreign affairs, M. Bondy, prefect of Paris, and General Guilleminot, major-general of the army under Davoust, met Wellington and Blücher there, at four o'clock on the evening of the 3rd July.

This was precisely the hour when Napoleon had at length quitted Malmaison, and stepped unknown into a common carriage, to proceed to the shore of the ocean. The evacuation of Paris by the French army, and its retreat behind the Loire, constituted the first article of the convention. The second stipulated that the English and Prussian armies should protect the actual authorities in Paris, as long as they should exist. The artillery and ammunition were delivered to the allies.

It was in fact a real capitulation, vainly adorned, to save the national honour, with the title of a convention; but every thing had unfortunately been sacrificed at Waterloo.

Assented to by the Chamber of Representatives.

XVI.

Paris, in a state of consternation, presented in its boulevards and its squares the same spectacle as in 1814: a migratory mass of farmers, driven from their villages by the advance of the foreign armies, encamped with their wives, their old men, their children, their flocks, and their carts laden with their furniture, in the streets and in the promenades of the capital. Fouché, master of all the springs of the police, employed them in spreading panic and mutual distrust in the public mind, to disconcert any idea of military sedition in the army, or of posthumous energy in the Chambers. He governed the crisis in the street, as he had governed it in the council of the Emperor, and in the council of government. The convention, thus adroitly prepared for, in the minds of the humbled people, was promulgated without provoking a murmur: it was received with an official resignation, and with a secret satisfaction by the Chamber. The old minister of the republic, Garat, ascended the tribune, and loudly acknowledged that honour was satisfied. He demanded solely that they should avail themselves of this interregnum to proclaim, in imitation of the English, a fundamental theory of the rights of man, to be for ever acknowledged by the governments which France should accept. This was opposed by Manuel, who demanded that the Chamber should resume the discussion of a constitution comprising one hundred articles, of which he was reporter. It was, perhaps, to serve, and certainly to gratify Fouché, thus to open a long and useless deliberation on principles in an assembly which had the enemy at their gates, and whose energy it was necessary to moderate and prevent from exploding. General Solignac demanded that thanks should be voted to the army. This vote was carried, and communicated in an address to the troops.

XVII.

Meanwhile the convention was in course of execution, without impediment, since the evening before, and St. Denis,

Opposition of the army.

occupied by the allies, had displayed the white flag. A passing commotion agitated the faubourgs and the last battalions of the army, at the moment when the Prussians arrived to occupy the posts in the vicinity of the city, and abandoned by the troops of the line. Some of the lower classes of the people, and some disbanded soldiers, uttering a cry to arms, mingled with imprecations against the traitors, fired their muskets in the air, upon the ramparts, as if in defiance of the foreigners, and to arouse the patriotism of the city; then spread themselves in threatening groups towards the Tuileries, where Fouché was sitting. Massena put himself at the head of the National Guard, which he had called out to protect the government and preserve order. The tumult subsided before the old warrior and the bayonets of the citizens armed to protect their city.

Outside the walls some battalions, desperate for a struggle, received with threatening vociferations the order to quit the capital. They shouted "Treason," and swore to the people who were retaining them, to defend Paris in spite of their chiefs. Some of them broke their arms and refused to march towards the Loire; while in the camp they talked of deposing from his command the stern Davoust, and of proclaiming Vandamme general and tribune of the troops. The Bonapartist generals secretly fomented these revolts amongst the soldiers. Vandamme, a popular, but disciplined soldier, near to the legitimate attainment of the highest dignities of the army, refused to ascend to them by means of sedition. He had himself voted in the council of defence, for an unavoidable retreat and for the Bourbons, now the only guarantees of independence and peace. General Drouot, who had commanded the Imperial Guard at Waterloo, presented himself to the troops, and convinced them by his counsel and his example. The army then contented itself with demanding its pay, after the example of the Roman cohorts of the Lower Empire, as if it wished to force a sale of its obedience upon that country, already overwhelmed by its war, and delivered up to the enemy by its defeat. The government, trembling at these demands, emptied the public coffers to satisfy them, and even borrowed from the

Entrance of the allied troops.

principal bankers of Paris the large sums necessary to appease the chiefs and soldiers. M. Lafitte, a popular and liberal banker, signalised himself by the generous co-operation which he offered on that day to the government. He lent it his gold and his credit, to preserve the city from the extremities to which the sedition of the army might expose the citizens. Amidst the sad necessities which the return of Napoleon had imposed upon France, M. Lafitte, and all the new men in the higher ranks of citizens, thought there was more patriotism in a peace made honourable by liberal conditions with the Bourbons, than in the prolonged disasters of the country, through the obstinacy of Napoleon.

Such was at this moment the feeling of all France, as proved by its attitude for the last three months. Dismayed but immovable, it saw Napoleon fall, as it had seen him return from the Isle of Elba. For a long time past, the nation had a cause distinct from the army. This separation of the army and the people, which, dated from the 18th Brumaire, alone explains what the historians of the military party have since attributed to the treason of the marshals, and the moral debasement of the nation. This is false: nothing can be explained by supposing cowardice in a people who had conquered the world, and who yet allowed themselves to be twice conquered without rising at the destruction of its armies and the invasion of its capital. The nation, humbled and afflicted, protested by its apathy against a cause which was decided on its own soil, but which was no longer its own, since the military sedition of the 18th Brumaire, and the imperial sedition of the 20th March, had made it the cause of a man and of a party. The city and the camp constituted two countries

XVIII.

The troops of Blucher and Wellington had entered Paris, and the Chamber of Representatives affected to be still deliberating on the constitution—a puerile imitation of the Roman senators awaiting the Gauls on their curule chairs. When those senators offered their necks to the soldiers of

Vote of the Chamber of Representatives.

Brennus, it was after they had fought to the gates of Rome's last stronghold. The Chamber of Representatives had neither fought nor furnished arms to the combatants. They had sat and debated, undecided between tyranny and liberty, until the moment when fate had pronounced against the man whom they had neither dared to overturn nor to support. They were neither the Chamber of the country, nor the Chamber of Napoleon; a confused and discordant mixture of all the half parties, they were nominated only by a small number of electors to observe passing events rather than to govern them. They had neither the nation nor the army at their back; and the part they were playing was puerile in face of the foreign conquerors. They had made no appearance in the negotiations at St. Cloud, which were altogether military. The public opinion of France had withdrawn from them. Fouché, who had made use of them for some days to keep down the dictatorial longings of the Emperor, was now embarrassed by them. He felt that, after having dismissed the Empire, it was now necessary promptly to dismiss before the new masters this idle phantom of a representation.

XIX.

The Chamber discussed for some hours, and voted with enthusiasm a declaration of rights, and a declaration of principles, which the smoke of Blucher's cannon was to obliterate an hour after. They arose in a body before an enemy absent and inattentive, as if to bid defiance to vacancy, and swore they were ready to die for independence while only a few paces from the English and Prussians encamped in their public promenades, and within hearing of their own soldiers giving up their walls to the enemy. Blucher and Wellington were only delaying their entrance until a more imposing force should join them, that they might by their numbers more decidedly strike the imagination of Paris.

On the eve of their entrance Fouché, by the authority of his colleagues, repaired to the head-quarters of Wellington at Neuilly. He described in the most sombre colours to the

Interview between Wellington and Fouché.

English commander-in-chief the situation of Paris and of France: he intentionally exaggerated the strength of the Napoleon and Republican parties, and he underrated that of the Royalists: he depicted the nation as a smouldering volcano, ready to explode under the throne of the Bourbons, and even under the armies of Europe; and to engulf all, if a popular hand, experienced in revolutions, did not know at once how to restrain it, or to dissipate its fury at the critical moment. He thus sufficiently indicated himself to the Duke of Wellington as the man of the emergency, and as the genius of the compromise between the revolutionary spirit and a second Restoration.

The Duke of Wellington, already fascinated by the agents of Fouché, and favourably impressed towards him by M. de Talleyrand himself, who loudly pretended to declare the necessity for having Fouché, was more convinced than ever by this conversation, that the King ought to confide, in every respect, as well for his re-entrance into Paris as for his government after, in the sovereign ability of a man who had managed the most complicated events with so great a superiority of intrigue and audacity. He saw in this man the subduer of the revolution, prepared for the part by the revolution itself. Fouché, delighted with the impression which he had produced upon the most influential man of the coalition, and through him upon the British cabinet (the real patron of Louis XVIII. in this way), begged of the Duke of Wellington to obtain from the King, who had already arrived at the chateau of Arnouville, under the walls of St. Denis, the most liberal declarations of amnesty and pacification. He showed him the danger of leaving Paris any longer at the mercy of chance, of the vicissitudes of opinion, of popular or military commotions, and of discussions of the Assembly; and conjured him to cut short all these uncertainties, by boldly entering Paris the following day. Wellington promised he would do so.

On leaving Neuilly, Fouché felt himself minister of the King, and arbiter of the Restoration. A confidential message from Talleyrand informed him that the King had consented to receive him privately the next day (the 6th July), at the

Fouché repairs to Louis XVIII.

chateau of Arnouville, the head-quarters of Louis XVIII. and his family. Fouché, to keep himself always on good terms with both parties, obtained the authority of his colleagues in the Government to attend this interview in his quality of President of the Provisional Government, under the pretext of convincing the King of the necessity of national institutions, and to exact from him the most satisfactory guarantees for persons and principles. He had no difficulty in convincing men already convinced by necessity, and who were interested in having a negociator so personally compromised, between themselves and the prince who was soon to be their master. Carnot had himself seen the King in 1814, and Caulaincourt had solicited permission to appear at his court. Fouché accordingly went to Arnouville on the 6th July

XX.

Everything was already pre-disposed in the mind of the King, in his council, and in his court, to prepare for Fouché the reception which a grateful prince owed to a man who restores to him his people, and smooths the way for his return to the throne. The Royalists, who had remained in Paris during the hundred days of Bonaparte's domination, had been crowding the road to Arnouville for the last two nights. Impatient to secure the return of the King, and to hasten back the reign which they had thought lost for ever, they had kept down all the antipathies of their birth, of their opinions, and even of their exile, against the pro-consul of the Reign of Terror, the regicide of Louis XVI., and the conspirator of the 20th of March. Parties who pardon nothing to those who have served them, pardon everything to those who are going to serve them. Usefulness, in their opinion, is an amnesty for all crimes. The Royalists of Charles the Second's time made a hero of Monk, the Royalists of Louis XVIII. made a Monk of Fouché, the ruler at once of the revolution, of the people, and of Napoleon. "Parties," they exclaimed, "only obey their accomplices." To serve, it had been necessary to betray. But did not treason in so holy a cause become the most mysterious

Numerous supporters of Fouché.

virtue? They were moved, they were excited into the very mysticism of admiration in speaking of so marvellous a tilter at revolutions. The court journal, the *Débats*, edited by writers the most confidentially acquainted with the thoughts of the aristocracy and of the court, humbled itself before the genius of this man, and saw in Fouché the supreme director of the vicissitudes of empires. "He had said to the King's friends" (said they), "in taking leave of them on the 20th of March, 'Save the King, I undertake to save the monarchy.' He has done more than he promised—he has saved the monarchy and brought back the King." "Everything," wrote M. de Chateaubriand himself, "took part in his praise: religion as well as impiety, virtue as well as vice, the Royalist and the Revolutionist, the foreigner and the Frenchman. From every side they exclaimed, that unless Fouché was the King's minister, there was neither safety for the King, nor salvation for France; that he alone had prevented a great battle, and that he alone could finish his work." He guaranteed pardon to the Bonapartists, concessions to the revolutionists, the peaceable occupation of Paris to the foreigners, to the Royalists the throne, and his life to the King himself. Gratitude still warm, complicity, interest, ambition, fear,—every passion of the human heart, generous, mercenary, or base, conspired at this moment in favour of Fouché. Even the intrigues of his rivals in ambition helped him without his knowledge. M. de Talleyrand, Prime Minister of Louis XVIII., the man of the Congress, the confidant and counsellor of the allied powers, was never tired of praising to the King, to the generals, and to the allied sovereigns, the genius of Fouché; and of acknowledging, with the appearance of superiority which recognises an equal, the necessity for having this man in the councils of the King. "I can do nothing without him," said he; "Fouché is at this moment the man of emergencies. Not to acknowledge this would be to reject the evidence of facts. He has France in his hand: we must take it from him or leave it."

XXI.

Thus spoke M. de Talleyrand. Why spoke he thus? Did he really believe what he said? No; he had never looked upon Fouché but as a subaltern Talleyrand, a revolutionist sprung from the dregs of factions, stained with blood, and bearing the stamp of the regicide which for ever disqualified him from negotiating with courts, or of commanding, in the name of a monarchy, the respect due to kings from their subjects. He did not honour his low and vulgar intriguing with the name of policy; he looked upon him from the eminence of his own birth as an upstart, he disdained him as an equal, he hated him as his rival, he merely deigned to accept him as his instrument.

M. de Talleyrand, in his capacity of a great revolutionary lord, a renegade courtier long in the suite of Bonaparte, and a priest who had repudiated both his priesthood and his faith, had appeared a scandalous gift of fortune at the court, and at the head of the councils of Louis XVIII. in 1814. He had been imposed upon them by events rather than accepted by the King, by the princes, the princesses, the courtiers, and by Europe itself. Penetrating, though impassive, the embarrassment of his position weighed upon and made him doubtful of the continuance of his ascendancy. He was too intelligent to think Fouché indispensable to the crown after Waterloo, with Paris evacuated by the French troops, and surrounded by five armies, comprising altogether a million of men. But by affecting to believe in the necessity for Fouché, and by daily declaring to the King that he could answer for nothing without this colleague, he adroitly avenged himself on the monarch, the princes, the princesses, the courtiers, and the emigrants. He forced them to raise up with their own hands, and in their own court, a scandal, before which the impropriety of his own elevation must disappear. What was, in fact, M. de Talleyrand,—a bishop absolved from his vows by the sovereign pontiff, a moderate constitutionalist and the friend of Mirabeau in 1790; an emigrant to America in 1793; of pure blood, high birth, famous for talents and negotiations during the Empire,—

Conflicting feelings of Louis XVIII.

by the side of Fouché, pro-consul and regicide; a murderer of the brother and the father of the princes and princesses who were about to admit him to their court and to their hearts? After such a sacrifice, voluntarily made to the utility of such a man, what would the Bourbons and their friends have to complain of in seeing M. de Talleyrand preside in their councils? By tainting themselves, he deprived them of all right to be astonished at his presence, or to stigmatize him for the future: he made Louis XVIII. a thousand times more than himself an accomplice in the revolution; he debased him lower than Fouché; and when once the public voice should be raised against the scandal of this unnatural minister, and that Fouché should be dismissed, the King and his court would have nothing further to oppose to his own domination in the government. Their contact with Fouché would have deprived them of all right to the affectation of shame on any other point

XXII.

Such were, without any doubt, the real thoughts of M. de Talleyrand when he opened his arms to Fouché at Arnouville, to conduct his rival in intrigue and ambition to the feet of the vanquished King. The struggle of Louis XVIII. must have been long before he bent under this opprobrium of destiny. To languish for twenty years an exile from the palace of his forefathers, was only a misfortune common to many kings; to fall from a throne but ill-established, before the irresistible prestige of a conqueror, and under the desertion of his own army, was only an inevitable reverse in a still tottering restoration; but, in reascending this throne, to take the hand stained with the blood of a king and a brother, to belie those royal imprecations, and those European lamentations with which this prince had filled every court of Europe! to inflict upon his beloved niece, the daughter of Louis XVI., the sight and the horror of the man who had sacrificed her father and her mother during the revolution! This was the worst of all his calamities, for it was the downfall of his honour, the disavowal of his rank, the lie given to his own blood. By

Final decision of the King.

declaring himself grateful, he became to all appearance in the eyes of history the accomplice. To pardon the regicide was only to execute the dying testament of his brother Louis XVI. ; but to elevate him to the rank of one of his ministers, and to place him at the head of his councils, was to acknowledge himself the vassal of what he had all his life denominated crime. The throne itself, if such a degradation of royal character had been necessary to ascend it, was too dear at this price. The impatience to reign dishonoured the reign itself.

The King felt all these considerations, if not in his heart, at least in his kingly pride ; but he thought that if he did not hasten to regain his crown, the manœuvres of Fouché, of Lafayette, and of Sebastiani, the contempt of Prussia, the hankering of the Emperor Alexander after the revolutionary popularity of some Parisian saloons, and the selfish and lurking interest of Austria, would succeed in transferring it to some other. The Duke of Wellington, M. de Talleyrand, the numerous adherents of Fouché about the court, perhaps M. de Vitrolles (the insinuating go-between from the royalists to Arnouville, and from Arnouville to the private cabinet of Fouché), had persuaded the King that the coalition, with the exception of England, was ready to abandon him to his fortune, and to crown another branch of his house. It may be supposed that the Count d'Artois himself, influenced by M. de Vitrolles, and his private court of gentlemen and of bishops, eager to return on any conditions, felt no less inclined in secret towards this weakness of the court, covered by the name of necessity ; and that they were not sorry to see the King stoop, on his own responsibility, to an act of baseness which they reserved for future reprobation. The King himself, who aspired to the title of a statesman, was, no doubt, afflicted at this moral constraint which placed him in the hands of a regicide ; but educated in the school of Machiavelli, and pretending to despise, in pursuing the interest of his house, his throne, and his people, the scruples of the vulgar, he braved, with a certain satisfaction of pride, his own sensibility. He thus seemed to say to M. de Talleyrand and the statesman whose admiration he coveted, "I am your equal in indifference as to the

Repugnance of the Duchess d'Angoulême towards Fouché.

means ;"—and to the timorous men of his court, " I am above your timid susceptibilities ; there is a philosophy of the throne which you do not understand." He forgot that if a sovereign must elevate himself above personal repugnances to save his people, no one can with impunity elevate himself above nature. Nature forbade him to allow himself to be presented to France, and borne to the throne by the hand of Fouché. There was blood between the minister and the King.

The Duchess d'Angoulême felt this bitterly. She repeatedly threw herself at her uncle's feet to conjure him to spare her this shame and affliction. She declared that no human consideration, not even obedience to the King, should compel her to meet in the palace one of the murderers of her father. She bathed with her tears the hand of the King, who was affectionate, moved, caressing, but inflexible. " My child," he said, " policy and nature have different laws ; it becomes you to weep, but it is my duty to save my people, and transmit you my throne : it is not the King of France who forgets himself, it is the regicide that humbles himself before the right of the crown, and it is the King who pardons great crimes redeemed by great services." The princess was obliged to devour in silence her humiliation and her grief, but she remained at her uncle's court. It would have been more filial and more dignified on her part to protest by her absence against a constraint which no ambition of reigning ought to impose upon the heart of a daughter.

XXIII

Fouché arrived at Arnouville with M. de Talleyrand. The King expected him. Nevertheless when the Prince de Poix (of the house of Noailles and a captain in his body guard), announced to him that the minister was waiting at the door of his cabinet for the promised audience, his Majesty turned pale and was uneasy. The shade of his brother appeared for a moment in his thoughts, between the judge of Louis XVI. and himself. He resumed, however, his calmness and majesty, dismissed the Prince de Poix, and admitted only the two

Fouché's interview with Louis XVIII.

statesmen into his cabinet. The private interview, and the conference between these three heads, which represented three such different epochs; the old régime, the empire, and the revolution, and whom a triple ambition brought together to reconcile them, had no other witnesses of this scene than the three actors themselves. Louis XVIII communicative in old age, has since confided its details to one of his court.

M. de Talleyrand having introduced Fouché, the King and the regicide looked at each other a long time without speaking; the King affecting the majesty and authority of the glance of a superior who condescends to be served; Fouché the timidity and embarrassment of a culprit who consents to be pardoned, but who feels that his services command rather than implore that pardon. M. de Talleyrand concealed under his immovable physiognomy the secret joy of humbling his master and of patronizing his rival. At this moment he towered over them both.

He came to the assistance of the two interlocutors, abridging the ceremonial, and cutting short all souvenirs and explanations. He told the King that in Fouché he brought to his feet a devoted and essential man, who had best seconded the events to which France was indebted for her King, and who alone could, under such difficult circumstances, enlighten the councils of the crown, and baffle the plots of its enemies. Fouché either feeling or feigning an emotion which, before royalty, deprived him of all presence of mind and self-command, could only bow and stammer forth some embarrassed words of gratitude and devotion to the prince and the monarchy, now once more become the only salvation of France, and the sole desire of all Frenchmen.

"I appreciate, Sir," said Louis XVIII. with the majesty of rank bowing before merit, "I appreciate very highly the services that you have rendered latterly to me and my cause, and those that you can render to me now more than ever in the ministry of police which you occupy. I had beforehand designed you in my thoughts for this post, one of the most important of my government. Give me your ideas to the best means of pacifying my people, consolidating my throne,

His advice to the King.

and bringing back all erring spirits to legitimate monarchy, the only guarantee for the safety, the independence, and the freedom of my subjects."

Fouché, still embarrassed, bowed in token of gratitude and acceptance of the King's confidence, and drawing a sad but exaggerated picture of the animosities of factions, the resources of Bonapartism, the agitations ill-appeased of the revolutionary spirit, spoke to him of the part of Henry IV., who had only conquered his people by yielding to the dominant ideas of his epoch, and by making himself less the king of his friends than the king of his enemies. He insisted on the absolute necessity of obliterating the past between France and the Bourbons, by an amnesty so complete and so real that it should resemble less an act of pardon than an act of oblivion.

"It is necessary," he said, "that all persons should remain, under the dominion of the King, not only at ease with respect to their conduct during the different revolutions which have filled up the interregnum of your house, with respect to their acquisition of national property, and the rank, functions, dignities, and titles they possess, but also as to the preservation of these honours and these functions, so that each may believe that the services he has rendered to the successive governments of France have been rendered to the King. In a word, your Majesty must adopt Franco, if you wish that France should irrevocably adopt your house. The sovereign wisdom of your house," he added, "has at all times raised it above the prejudices, the weaknesses, and the resentments of its own party. Europe and the nation know that it is less a king than a great statesman that Providence has now restored to the throne in your person, and all the world will see in your Majesty the genius of the reconciliation of interests, and of the restoration of thrones. Your Majesty must impart your wisdom to those who are around you, and who would again forfeit the crown if it were left at the mercy of their narrow intellects and their paltry passions. The times require concessions, and Paris will never be quiet but at this price. It is easy to enter into this course, but difficult to remain in it. This is the moment to make those concessions; at a later period they will, perhaps,

M. de Talleyrand submits the names of a new ministry to the King.

appear to be forced by the impatience and agitation of public opinion: to-day France will be grateful, to-morrow importunate and thankless. Facts must be admitted as rights, and care must be taken not to contest with the Chambers, or with public opinion, the guarantees of safety and of dignity which they set forth in their declaration, as conditions of their honourable capitulation, and causes of their submission "

XXIV.

M. de Talleyrand, by his silence and by his gestures, appeared to acquiesce in all the counsels of Fouché. The King only declared himself with moderation and reserve. Proud of the high opinion that even the revolution, in the person of Fouché, had of his moderation and wisdom, he listened to him, however, with distrust, dissembled beneath an appearance of confidence. He was willing to reassure Bonapartism, still in possession of the ministry, of the government, and of the Chambers, but he did not wish to compound with it. To grant everything to the general interests of the revolution, and to the new opinions which had the majority in the country, entered with force and reason into his ideas; but to place himself in the hands of the army of Napoleon's functionaries, of the conspirators of the 20th March, and of the two Chambers nominated by Napoleon, or under his influence, was, in the eyes of the King, to abdicate.

He did not dissemble to his new minister that he never would confound the real requirements of national opinion with the ambitions and importunities of the Bonapartist party; and that it was necessary to disembarrass the position of the government from the army and the Chambers of the 20th March. Fouché undertook to do this: he had gone too far now ever to recede; and after what he had done for the King he might still advise, but he could no longer refuse anything.

M. de Talleyrand submitted to the King, in presence of the new minister of police, with great deference to his opinion, the names of the new ministry which the dismissal of M. de Blacas, and the transition from exile to the throne, made it

Distribution of the various departments.

necessary to reconstruct. M. de Talleyrand kept for himself the office of foreign affairs, the management of Europe, and the traditions of the Congress of Vienna; Fouché, with the ministry of police, kept under his hand all the springs of public opinion, and the high policy of the interior. Baron Louis took the finance department; and M. de Jaucourt, also devoted to M. de Talleyrand, took the marine.

M. Pasquier, an old member of the parliament of Paris, and formerly prefect of the police under the Empire, but untarnished by treason and defection in the return of the Emperor, was minister of justice.

Marshal Gouvion St. Cyr, one of the most consummate of Napoleon's generals, who had, like Macdonald, remained faithful in his allegiance to the King, was minister of war.

The King and M. de Talleyrand agreed with Fouché, to reserve the government of the King's household for M. de Richelieu, aide-de-camp and friend of the Emperor of Russia, in order to give a pledge to that court.

M. Molé, who had gone over from the Empire to the Bourbons, from the Bourbons to the Empire, and who consented to pass again from the Empire to the Bourbons, was presented by Fouché for a department. The King, in consideration of his monarchical name, of his youth full of promise, and of his talents, calculated to serve and adorn all governments, appointed him to the direction of public works.

Another aide-de-camp of the Emperor of Russia, M. Pozzo di Borgo, a man of universal comprehension, management, and eloquence, calculated for a constitutional government where eloquence is necessary, was privately chosen for minister of the interior. M. Pozzo di Borgo had not quitted the King during his exile at Ghent, where he was the representative of Alexander's friendship. Decided on returning to the service of France, his country, through a post so confidential and important, he was desirous, however, of waiting the arrival of his sovereign, the Emperor of Russia, to obtain his authority for accepting the confidence of Louis XVIII.

M. Pasquier, calculated for all departments, by his demeanour, as well as by his flexibility to all circumstances, was

Fouché's reception by the courtiers of Louis XVIII.

appointed to direct the home department during the indecision of M. Pozzo di Borgo.

A young man, M. Decazes, until then unknown, and whose high fortune dates from this lucky chance, was appointed prefect of police; recommended to the King and the council for this prominent post by the courage and resolution, in act and language, which he had displayed at Paris and at Bordeaux, against Napoleon during the hundred days after the example of M. Lainé. He was accepted by Fouché, whose authority no other person of importance amongst the Royalists would submit to by filling this subordinate branch of his department.

It was settled that this ministry should assemble privately at Paris that same evening, and prepare everything for the unexpected entrance of the King into that capital on the following day

XXV.

After this conference, which lasted two whole hours, in the King's cabinet, and after these ministerial arrangements were settled, Fouché, still under the guidance of M. de Talleyrand, passed through the apartments of the Chateau of Arnouville, which were filled with the old and new courtiers of Louis XVIII. He was received there with repugnance by some, with assiduity by others, and with astonishment by all. He had by this time regained his serenity and assurance.

"Duke of Otranto," said M. de Talleyrand to him, with a smile, in the presence of some of the great officers of the crown, "you know not the spell that attends a legitimate monarch, and, above all, a monarch whose understanding places him on a level with his throne. Confess that you have been somewhat abashed in his presence." Fouché felt too much the necessity of flattering the prince and his court by admitting his confusion, not to acquiesce in the observation of Talleyrand. He carried off the prize of so many stratagems and so much audacity, in the possession of a power which was to impose at once upon the friends and the enemies of the Bourbons. He saw, without quitting the post of minister and arbiter of all parties, three monarchies enter, pass away, and return, under

M. de Chateaubriand.

his guardianship. He had dismissed a restoration, he had directed and played with an empire: he had recalled a second restoration, and he was now going to dismiss his colleagues as his subalterns, and the Chambers as exhausted instruments. He had quelled by his tactics, and by the equilibrium of parties, the genius and the distrust of Napoleon. He had compelled the King of the old regime to place his fate in the hands of a pro-consul of the convention and a minister of Bonaparte. He played with three or four destinies, superior to all by the contempt he entertained for them. He only estimated these positions by the difficulties he had experienced in attacking and winning them. Doubtless he felt the secret baseness of his procedure; but in this baseness he saw so much audacity, and so much superiority over the vulgar, that he applauded himself for the means in attaining the end, and esteemed himself greater than men and parties, from the facility with which he deceived both one and the other.

The shades of night concealed his return to Paris

XXVI.

There was, however, one man connected with the exile of Louis XVIII., and included in the councils, already dismissed, of Arnouville, who foresaw in this presence, and in the complicity of the King with Fouché, the coming degradation of royalty: this was M. de Chateaubriand. By his poetic spirit,—that nobility of intellect and feeling—he had, almost alone, the revelation of honour; by his genius he divined, from afar, the judgment of posterity on this indignity of the crown.

He had scarcely learned that Fouché had appeared in the presence of Louis XVIII. presented by M. de Talleyrand, and that he had carried away with him his confidential nomination to the ministry of police, when he presented himself at the door of the King's cabinet, and earnestly begged to be admitted to an audience. The King, who did not like this writer, and who dreaded his presence, lest he should have to blush before him for the appointment he had just made, refused for a long time to receive him. The obstinate importunity, however, of

M. de Chateaubriand's interview with the King.

M. de Chateaubriand, his title of member of the prince's council, his fidelity, his voluntary exile, and his services at Ghent, claiming especial consideration from the King, he at length admitted this illustrious servant to his presence.

M. de Chateaubriand, with every mark of respectful attachment to his house and person, stated to his Majesty what he had just heard, but refused to believe. He supplicated him by the memory of his brother, by the honour of his house, and by respect for his own name, to spare the history of his reign from a concession which his enemies would style an ignominy. He represented to him the consternation of the royalists, on learning that the judge who had condemned Louis XVI. to the scaffold, was to sit in the presence of the King, the brother of that Louis XVI., in his councils, and even in the palace of his victim. He depicted to his view the heart of the Duchess d'Angoulême, to draw from it those cries of grief and indignation, which respect would doubtless keep smothered before him, but which would break forth before the shade of her father, and before her God! He obtained, however, nothing but impassible silence, and signs of fixed resolution in the features and gestures of the King.

"It is essential, Sir," his Majesty sternly replied. "No good Frenchman can have any pretension to feel the necessity, and the grief conquered by duty towards his people, more strongly than the King." "Ah!" cried Chateaubriand, "if the throne itself was in reality the price of such a sacrifice, it would become, above all, a prince so enlightened and so noble as your Majesty to sacrifice that throne to virtue!" He was proceeding still further, but the King, impelled by impatience at his importunity, and equally embarrassed to refuse as to reply, pointed to the door and exclaimed, "Begone, Sir!" Chateaubriand bowed sorrowfully, and retired, bearing a murmur in his heart which was never appeased.

XXVII

Fouché, on his return to Paris, concerted in the evening, with his new colleagues, the private measures to be taken

Position of the Provisional Government.

during the night for the entrance of the King on the following day. All Paris was thrown into a state of feverish excitement, as on the approach of a catastrophe which is to decide the fate of all. The faubourgs were crowded with groups who insulted the Royalists going to Arnouville, and who threatened to close the capital against a king brought back by the troops who had fought against their brothers. They displayed, they trampled on, and otherwise insulted the white flag, while bands paraded through the streets, demanding the heads of the traitors. The National Guard, patient, but few in number, with difficulty restrained these commotions.

The Chambers swore to die at their post if the royal proclamations did not contain the guarantees promised every day by Fouché to lull them. The provisional government, feeling the impossibility of resisting, and the shame of yielding, pretended to sympathise with these requirements of the military population, and of the Chambers, and left to Fouché all the dangers, all the responsibilities, and all the reproaches of the event. These he accepted with an intrepidity, a duplicity, and an assurance worthy of a better cause, and of a more elevated character. He allowed them to lament and murmur, to save appearances, for he knew that they wished to appear deceived, and to be compelled by the force of events into an abdication which would appear less humiliating to them if they could attribute it to treason and force of arms. He treated them as they wished to be treated.

The part performed by Carnot and his colleagues was terminated, from the day they had attached their cause to that of Napoleon. Vanquished with him at Waterloo, vanquished a second time by his forced abdication at Paris, they were nothing more than flags of truce between two revolutions, which were about to be determined without their concurrence. They pretended to have confidence in Fouché for making conditions for freedom, or to guarantee safety and amnesty for the Empire; but in reality they hoped for nothing more than to be relieved at any price from the burden which weighed heavy upon them. They might with more resolution have followed the army of the Loire, or tried the fate of battle at Paris, but

Resignation of the Provisional Government.

they had done neither one nor the other. The weakness of the army had deterred them from war with the allies, while patriotism and public opinion had equally deterred them from civil war: they could, therefore, only expire amidst all parties, under the hand of a colleague more perverse, but more able and resolute than they were.

XXVIII.

Fouché, eager to dismiss them, that he might deliver the palace of the Tuileries to the King, assembled them on the morning of the 9th of July. He narrated to them his conferences with the Duke of Wellington, and with Louis XVIII. He assured them that he had received from the former all the concessions and all the guarantees for which the Government and the Chambers had outwardly shown so much solicitude. By these he meant the amnesty and liberal institutions, for already everybody had ceased to think about Napoleon. A new prince carries off his posterity with him—old dynasties alone leave roots and offshoots after their fall.

While Fouché was speaking with this freedom of mind, and apparent security to his colleagues, as if to induce them to disengage themselves at length from public affairs, and to retire, General Blücher, in conformity with an arrangement made by him the evening before with Wellington and Fouché, occupied with his troops the gardens and palace of the Tuileries, without resistance. The members of the government protested in vain against this violation of the article of the capitulation, which confided the interior of the city, the palaces, and the public buildings to the National Guard. The Prussian general replied, that he only recognised the orders of his chief. "Well, then," said Fouché, with anger, real or assumed, "we will retire; but after having recorded, in a final message to the Chambers, the violence which has been offered to us;" and he accordingly wrote as follows:—

"Monsieur le President,—Until now we have been led to believe that the allied sovereigns were not unanimous in

Its character reviewed.

their choice of the prince who is to reign over France. Our plenipotentiaries gave us the same assurance on their return. Nevertheless, the ministers and generals of the allied powers declared yesterday, in the conferences they had with me, that all the sovereigns had pledged themselves to replace Louis XVIII. upon the throne, and that he is to make his entrance into the capital either this evening or to-morrow.

"The foreign troops have just occupied the Tuileries, where the government is sitting.

"In this state of affairs we can do no more than offer up our vows for the country; and our deliberations being no longer free, we think it our duty to separate.

(Signed)

FOUCHÉ,
CARNOT,
CAULAINCOURT,
QUINETTE,
GRENIER."

"Paris, July 7, 1815

XIX.

Thus retired, without a murmur, before an appearance of violence which they could neither prevent, fly from, nor repulse, and under the injunction of one of their colleagues, already at that moment the minister of a new government, these men who had been forced to accept the part of dupes, although they perfectly well knew the manœuvres of Fouché to remove from their heads the suspicion of cowardice or treason. No government of France had ever until then so shamefully terminated its career. It was not, however, either personal courage, or patriotism, or honour, in which these men were deficient; but, with the exception of Quinette and Grenier, chosen from amongst the men who were strangers to the 20th of March, the situation of the three others was so false in a government created to dismiss and replace Napoleon, that they were of necessity as deficient in dignity and conformity with their own acts, as they were in their resignation

of power. Caulaincourt, the creature and negotiator of Napoleon, and Carnot, who, by an inconsistency of patriotism, explained by his friends, but inexplicable to history, had accepted from him a ministerial department, and a ridiculous court title in addition to his Republican name, had come direct from the confidential councils of Napoleon at the Elysée, to undertake, in the name of the Chambers, to watch him, to counteract him, and to proscribe him. This unnatural part, once accepted, they could no longer be anything but the playthings of events, and of the vain official names behind which Fouché masked his real policy.

Too enlightened not to see as well as he did the absolute impossibility of resisting in Paris, with a handful of men, the armies of all Europe—too honourable, however, themselves to betray the remains of the Bonapartist party, which they represented in the government—they allowed it to be betrayed, and they assisted in the treason. This treason being accomplished, they signed with their own hands their deception and their humiliation in this act. There was an end of them for the Republicans, for the faithful adherents of Napoleon, for the partisans of Napoleon II., for the Constitutionals, whose guarantees they gave up,—in short, for every party. They had now only to disappear from every stage. The last resembled a scene of comedy representing the catastrophe of one of the great tragedies of history: the triumvirs of the Republic, of the Empire, and of Napoleon II., dissolved and dismissed by Figaro. History has some pages in which Tacitus should relinquish the pen to Terence, to Moliere, or to Beaumarchais.

XXX

Cambacères, a personage of high comedy also—a Bonapartist in spite of himself during the hundred days—a favourite frightened at his favour, and wishing for obscurity, as another would wish for a great part, in which to shelter his timidity and his fortune—was President of the Chamber of Peers when the message of the government was delivered to him. He read it with resignation to his colleagues. It was received

M. Decazes undertakes to dismiss the Chamber of Representatives.

with silence, and the Chamber was speedily evacuated by those senators, accustomed to follow the obsequies of so many governments, and the first to turn towards the rising sun of all favours and all servilities.

In the Chamber of Representatives, the Bonapartists, the Republicans, and those who affected, under the inspiration of Fouché, the attitude of expectation and hope, protested by some murmurs and empty exclamations against the violence done to their functions. Manuel interrupted the speculative discussion of the constitution to assure the Chamber that the foreign armies themselves, intimidated by the sacredness of the national representation, would allow their deliberations to continue with due solemnity amidst the noise of arms; and that in case violence should dare to meddle with their functions, they would exclaim, as Mirabeau did in the Constituent Assembly: "We are here by the will of the people, and we shall not quit but by the force of bayonets!"

But a meeting of ministers took place in the evening at the residence of M. de Talleyrand; when Fouché, having expressed the embarrassment he felt in dismissing the Chamber of Representatives—whose presence had the appearance of opposing government to government, without employing foreign bayonets, and enacting one of those scenes stained with blood and vindictive language, which resound and loudly protest against a government in the page of history—M. Decazes, urged by his Royalist principles and ambition to do some service, approached Fouché, and said to him, with an air of confidence: "I undertake to rid you of the Assembly, if such be your pleasure. You have only to give me the order, and I will answer for the rest." Fouché delighted, wrote the order instantly at M. de Talleyrand's table, and gave it to M. Decazes, congratulating him on his assurance.

The young prefect immediately retired, and calling together at his house a few trustworthy National Guards, whose Royalist principles were known to him, directed them to assemble during the night the National Guards of their respective legions on whom they could depend, and to take possession before daybreak of the Chamber of Representatives, the doors

Protest of Lafayette

of which they should close against the deputies in the name of the King's government.

This order was executed with the zeal which public opinion and the coming triumph of a new-born government always impart to its partisans in France. The deputies, on arriving at daybreak the next morning at the gates of their palace, found them closed against them, and all entrance forbidden. They retired murmuring, some to save appearances, others from honourable feeling, and a few for the cause of freedom. The people, who no longer recognised in them either Napoleon, or the Republic, or the country, but a few orators, mad for aimless discussion upon ruins, only responded to their murmurs by the most perfect indifference.

XXXI

Lafayette owed to his name and his past career a more personal and striking protest. This he endeavoured to make by extending his arms and haranguing the people in front of the railing. The people, who knew him no longer, were as deaf to his voice as the gates. Everything was shut against him during this short aspiration for a great part which he had attempted to resume. After having detested Napoleon, been one of the first to welcome the return of the Bourbons in 1814, and to salute the Count d'Artois at the Tuilleries, he had abandoned those princes on the 20th of March, and been a candidate for election to the Chamber of Representatives. Suspicious of Napoleon, though he had allowed him to take the sceptre and the sword after the 20th of March, he had exasperated the Chamber against the dictator, and watched for the moment of his weakness to assist in dragging him down. Waterloo afforded him this opportunity, and he had seized upon it with a bitterness of hatred which did not sufficiently respect misfortune. Disappointed since the abdication in his hope of directing the new government, and of being the arbiter between a restoration and liberty, he had been equally disappointed in his attempt at negotiation in the name of the Chamber with the allied sovereigns. On returning to Paris

Fouché and Carnot.

he asserted that Sebastiani and himself had obtained from the allies the free choice of a monarch who should be agreeable to France. He had a longing, it is said, for the Duke of Orleans, as an additional deviation from the monarchical principle, and as an additional degradation of royalty, which he had all his life endeavoured to weaken, without having the frankness and the energy to suppress it. The allies gave the lie effectually to this pretended negotiation by sweeping away the Chamber, and unanimously installing the Bourbons in the Tuileries. Lafayette finding no echo amongst the people, silently mingled with the crowd, and witnessed in the evening, obscure and unperceived, the expulsion of a representative body which he had agitated, and the ruin of a cause which he had disarmed in disarming Napoleon.

Fouché alone triumphed of all those men who had disappeared, some amidst their conspiracies, others in their fanaticism—the latter in their ambition, the former in their inconsistency, but all in their incapacity. Nothing remained to them but murmurs, which Fouché braved; for, having no conscience, he had no remorse.

Carnot, on hearing that Fouché was minister of police to Louis XVIII., and that he was directed to draw up with his own hand lists of exile against his accomplices and colleagues, presented himself at his audience. He bestowed on him a look in which was fully expressed the contempt of a sincere heart for the success of political knavery, and making use of that rough old revolutionary familiar style of which these two Republicans had contracted the habit in the convention, "Where am I to go to, traitor?" he demanded of him. "Where thou wilt, fool!" replied Fouché. He probably respected Carnot sufficiently, or despised him too much, to include him in the list of proscriptions.

This little dialogue, true or false, is at least historical. It admirably qualified a government composed of an able and cunning man, and one simple and deceived. Fouché was tarnished—Carnot was judged.

BOOK THIRTIETH.

Review of the Hundred Days—Entrance of Louis XVIII. into Paris—Speech of M. de Chabrol—Answer of Louis XVIII.—Louis XVIII. at Paris—Acclamations of the populace—Political position of the King—Attitude of Fouché—Ordinances for the re-organization of the Peerage, and for the convocation of the Chamber of Deputies—The Army of the Loire—Orders of the day of Marshal Davoust—Submission of the Army to Louis XVIII.—The Army adopts the White-flag—Blucher wishes to blow up the Bridge of Jena—Devastation of the Museum and the Libraries—Violence of the Prussians—Requisitions—Removal of the Prefects—War Imposts—Occupation of Paris and France by the Allied Armies—Disbanding of the Army of the Loire—Marshal Davoust superseded by Marshal Macdonald—Diplomatic Negotiations at the residence of Lord Castlereagh—Ultimatum of the Allied Powers—Aversion of Louis XVIII. for M. de Talleyrand—Court of Louis XVIII.—His family—Favour of M. Decazes—M. Decazes—His portrait—Retrospect of his life—His interview with the King—Fouché's report—Proscriptions—Weakness of the King.

I.

Thus finished the hundred days of Bonaparte's second Empire, commenced by an armed descent, in profound peace, upon the shores of his country; triumphing by the seduction and by the sedition of the army; tarnished by the treason of some chiefs; prosecuted through the humiliating submission of the nation to the army; weakened by the indifference, the disaffection, or the indignation of all good citizens; ruined by the defeat of Waterloo, and the annihilation of that heroic but culpable army; finished by the indecision of Napoleon, and by his abdication, yielded too soon, or too late to the eagerness of the Chambers; made use of and sold to the Bourbons, without conditions for liberty, by the ambition of Fouché, and the inaction of his colleagues; finally dishonoured

Review of the Hundred Days.

by a second invasion of Europe, and by the temporary subjection of the soil of the country by foreign powers.

Such was this second Empire, a short and deplorable parody on the first. Such for France was the result of this attempt of its ancient chief against its repose, its independence, and its safety. In undertaking it, Napoleon showed but little solicitude for his country, which had only to risk itself for his cause, little care for his fame, which could only suffer, and little acquaintance with history, which never begins again. His landing at Cannes was a crime against his country; his march upon Paris was a heroism and a triumph, but it was the heroism of selfishness, and the triumph of sedition. The preparations for war were indolent, undecided, and embarrassed by that hesitation between the part of a dictator and that of a constitutional prince, the restorer of the people's sovereignty. The campaign was a bold cue, the battle desperate but successive, piecemeal, without unity, and devoid of the light of genius. By not risking all, as Ney and the aspect of the battle urged him to do, he lost all. Defeat dethroned him at once at the frontier and in his capital. The men, the Assembly of Representatives were rash; his concessions forced; his resignation of the Empire humiliating; his retreat to Malmaison inexplicable in a man who knew what fortune was; his offers of service puerile; his flight to the sea-coast tardy; his embarkation, suspended to await impossibilities with one foot on the ocean, was chimerical. His surrender on board an enemy's vessel, without having made conditions, was madness; his captivity, written beforehand. Every thing with him, during this period of his life, is marked with symptoms of decay and blindness, except his march on Paris, the most intrepid and the most personal of all his campaigns. He rushed forward, without looking before or behind him, towards the throne. But from the moment he had attained it he staggered at the difficulties he had dared, and he precipitated himself in order to descend from them. This caprice of *ennui*, of heroism, and of ambition on the part of Napoleon, cost France more than two thousand millions of francs, in armaments, tributes, and war indemnities to Europe; the insur-

The consequences to France of Napoleon's attempt.

rection—first and fatal example of her army against the laws, the honour of her generals, and of her marshals—forgetting their oaths to their country in their reluctant concession to the military popularity of one man, the last veteran army which remained to her from the invasion of 1814, her fame as a nation invincible on the field of battle—the spell of her glory, her frontiers restricted by the sword of the conquerors, her soil invaded, her cities at the mercy of foreigners, her capital profaned, her monuments despoiled by reprisals, her provinces and strongholds occupied for three years until the liquidation of her ransom, and finally, the disarming and disbanding of the remains of Waterloo! It cost, in addition, the government of the Bourbons which had the succession of these disasters, the independence, the freedom, and the popularity of the throne, which has been unjustly accused of the consequences of the crime of this second invasion. The King must have had great courage, or a great thirst of dominion, to accept a throne and a people buried under so many ruins.

There never was, perhaps, an epoch in the history of France more desperate, more humiliating, and more grievous for the country, than these hundred days, and the period that immediately followed them. Country, monarchy, liberty, honour of the army, patriotism of the people, character of the Chambers, public finances, and glory of arms—all suffered, even to the national honour. A terrible lesson to the soldiery who dare all, and still more terrible to the people who allow every thing to be dared against them by these tribunes of glory. France had not made herself respected by her army on the 20th March, and both France and the army paid for their fault; the one by the loss of its blood, and of its domination, the other by the loss of its dignity, and of its independence.

II.

It was under these melancholy circumstances that the King again entered Paris. Therefore, whether out of shame for his people, or the apprehension of his ministers of exciting a desperate commotion and of subjecting the King to personal

Entry of the King into Paris.

dangers from the balls or the poignards of some desperate fanatic of the Empire, his entrance into the capital was not announced by the cannon of the forts and of the foreign troops, until the moment he was passing through the faubourgs and the boulevards to enter his palace. M. Decazes, dreading the faubourg St. Denis, which had been, with the faubourg St. Antoine, one of the most tumultuous strongholds of the fédérés, had counselled the King to enter by Clichy towards the close of the day.

"No," replied Louis XVIII., alluding to the nocturnal entry of Napoleon on the 20th of March; "I wish to pass through Paris in open day, and in the midst of my country. When they see their King in France, there are no more leaguers!"

III.

The King accordingly entered in the middle of the day. In spite of all the government precautions to misdirect the multitude, it was immense on his passage. All catastrophes are a solace for the people. The party of Napoleon, composed almost exclusively of men of the court and men of the camp, had disappeared four days before, having either followed the army of the Loire, or shut themselves up in their hotels, awaiting the inevitable event, and negotiating with Fouché for their amnesties, their dignities, and their fortunes. The people, who had at first been enthusiastic at the miraculous return of their Emperor, and by their acclamations accomplices of the military sedition of the 20th of March, had no longer recognised either the army in its defeat, or the Emperor in his indecision, in his flight upon Paris, in his immobility at the Elysée, in his abdication, and in his careless retreat at Malmaison. His popularity was exhausted, and there only remained amongst the masses resentment for so many deceptions, and grief for the country and the capital, delivered by a single battle into the hands of foreigners. The nobles and the citizens in mass, the first through love for the Bourbons, and as a retaliation for their defeat of the 20th of March, the latter through a love for peace, for their business, and for their security,

The King's reception.

had only one heart to recall, to look upon, and to cheer Louis XVIII.

In his short reign, so unhappily interrupted, this prince had not had time to render his government unpopular. His reign had been cut short by the violence of the Bonapartists at the commencement of its hopes. These hopes revived with his return. An imprecation, almost unanimous, was uttered against Napoleon alone, his family, his courtiers, and his soldiers, for the calamities of the country. This imprecation, which as yet no one dared to vent in reprisals against the civil or military conspirators of the hundred days, was poured out in acclamations and emotions for the Bourbons. The white flag, which had been hoisted since morning as a signal of peace on the pavilion of the Tuileries, had set flying in an instant a million of flags of the royal colour from all the windows of the faubourgs, and of the streets and squares which the cortége was to pass through. All Paris seemed spontaneously to decorate itself with the banner of the lilies. This time, at least, the impulse was not given by some itinerant groups of Royalists, nor favoured by Fouché: this minister, on the contrary, wished to cool down the royal reception, to exaggerate in the eyes of the Bourbons the repugnance and irritations of Paris. But the enthusiasm for peace swept away these vain precautions of cunning. The King returned on this occasion, still more than in 1814, as a reparation for some, as a repentance for others, as a salvation for all.

IV.

The National Guard, which had been placed under the command of General Dessolles, formerly one of Moreau's generals, who was beloved by the army, and agreeable to the Bourbons, by the antipathy which the men of this party bore to the Empire, lined with their neutral and pacific bayonets the streets through which the King was to pass. Innumerable columns of unarmed citizens, of royalist youths, and of artisans, succeeded each other in the faubourg St. Denis, rushing spontaneously forward to meet Louis XVIII., with

cries of "Vive le Roi!" and with the popular song of "Vive Henri IV.!" These people, by their concurrence, their masses, and their demonstrations, seemed as if they wished to hide from their prince, and to hide from themselves, the aspect of foreign armies, whose appearance humbled and saddened his return. They wished to prove that between the King and Paris there had only been one man and his satellites; and that when once this man had disappeared, and his army had withdrawn, the people and their King would embrace, by the national impulse of a father towards his children, and of children towards their parent. The population of Paris, so cold, so silent, and so absent on the 20th of March, revenged themselves now for that day, and protested, though too late, against the oppression which the army had made them suffer.

V.

At three o'clock the King appeared at the barrier St. Denis. He was accompanied by the Count d'Artois on horse back at one door of his carriage, and the Duke de Berry, his nephew, at the other, and surrounded by Marshals Marmont, Oudinot, Victor, Macdonald, Gouvion St. Cyr, the Duke de Feltre, and Generals Maison, Villatte, and Dessolles, some of them companions of his short exile at Ghent, the others having remained faithful to their duty and their oaths during the interregnum. The military household of the King and the princes, the royal guards, the musketeers, and the light dragoons of the guard, the royal volunteers, and the grenadiers of La Rochejaquelein, which formed the little army of the prince at Alost, and which was increased and re-formed on the King's route, since his return to France, marched in his rear, saluting the National Guard, composed of their friends, their fathers, and their brothers, and saluted by them in return, as guests impatiently expected at the national hearth. This escort, entirely French, imparted to this return at least a national aspect. It was neither the foreigner nor the civil war which triumphed in this embracing of Paris and the Bourbons. This time they were voluntary exiles, who had not

M. de Chabrol's address to the King.

drawn their swords against their country, but who, removed from it for a moment by their fidelity, received its recompense in the free and cordial reception of the people, freed from the compression of the army. The reception of the King in 1814 had been more full of curiosity, but this was replete with emotion and sensibility. Tears rolled down many faces; they had been so unfortunate on both sides, that they were now eager to repair and to forget the common disaster. The King concealed the foreigner, and all took refuge in him, once more to find in him their country.

VI.

Fouché had recalled to the prefecture of Paris M. de Chabrol, a man of solid popularity, the same who had presented to Louis XVIII. the keys of Paris in 1814, and presided over the city during the first restoration. M. de Chabrol, although a magistrate of the Empire, had had sufficient respect for himself and for his country to retire with the Bourbons on the return of the Emperor. Fouché was desirous that M. de Chabrol should insinuate conditions to Louis XVIII. in the speech he was to deliver in the name of the city of Paris, and that he should give advice and warning to the monarch; but M. de Chabrol declined so ungracious a task, at such a moment. Were not the defection, the flight, the exile, the blood shed at Waterloo, the return into the invaded provinces, and the capital occupied by four foreign armies, warnings sufficiently eloquent of themselves? and was it becoming to sadden still more this reconciliation of the King and the people by sinister recollections and forebodings? Was it necessary, moreover, thus to invert the parts, and to give to the King alone the appearance of doing all the wrong, when the people and the army were, at least, equally reproachable? Was it for those, who had allowed the capital and the throne to be invaded by Napoleon, to demand reparation from Louis XVIII. whom they had themselves abandoned, dethroned, and proscribed? M. de Chabrol, on the contrary, confined himself to enumerating the calamities which the hundred days of Bonaparte's

The King's reply.

presence, and of the absence of the legitimate government, had cost the country, and to soliciting for all errors the pardon contained in the breast of a king and of a father, and for all misfortunes the forgiveness and consolation necessary to repair all.

Louis XVIII., with a propriety which was the gift of his nature, and the inspiration of his policy, replied without making any allusion of reproach or of vengeance to the mouth-piece of the city of Paris: "I did not leave my capital but with the most lively grief, I return to it with emotion: I had but too well foreseen the evils with which it was threatened, and I am come back to prevent and to repair them."

These words comprised the whole situation. There was a reproach in them, but softened by sorrow; a promise to intervene between France and the enemy, to temper victory if possible; an augury of good government.

But if Louis XVIII. wished to soften the expression of the bitterness and humiliations that such a return in the midst of foreign armies inflicted on the nation, he would not too complaisantly dissemble from the people the heavy grief and patriotic resentment which he experienced in passing through his capital invaded, and his provinces conquered, by the sedition of some and the weakness of all. He quickly closed the window of his carriage, which he had only opened to listen to the prefect of Paris, and his features, for the remainder of the route, assumed a majestic and impassible expression, in which great dignity was mingled with a tinge of anger. He wished the people to understand that he had returned without hatred, but not without a recollection of the injury that had been done to him. He effaced the tear from his eyes, the smile from his lips, and all appearance of royal condescension from his gestures. It was plain to be seen that he did not wish to implore a reception, or to beg for the throne; but to resume, with a full right and a rigid authority, a reign which had been interrupted by factions. This sentiment, depicted on his visage, was understood by the people, who love pride even against themselves. The more reserve the King maintained in his demonstrations, the more those of the crowd were multiplied and affecting. It appeared as if the population of

The King enters the Tuileries.

Paris wished to pluck from his heart the grief which closed it, and the pardon which ought to spring from it.

VII.

On approaching the palace by the Carrousel, the triumphal entry of the King was still further saddened by the presence of the Prussian troops, who were encamped in the courts and in the garden. This palace of a people resembled the prison of Europe. The National Guard and the military household of the King, hastened to take possession of the doors, the staircases, and the armories, to conceal from France, and from its monarch, the mortification of seeing a royal residence in the heart of the capital, guarded by soldiers of the north. The King alighted from his carriage on the same steps from which he had taken his departure one hundred days before, by the light of the torches which had illumined his flight; and from which Napoleon had been lifted the day after, and borne to the throne in the arms of his grenadiers. He was received there by his servants, who threw themselves at his feet, and bedewed with tears of joy the skirt of his coat. Conducted by them to the balcony of the hall of the marshals, which looks on the garden of the Tuileries, he received there, in the unanimous and impassioned cries of an innumerable multitude, the welcome due to his return, and a touching reparation for his exile. These acclamations, renewed at every gesture he made, continued as long as the daylight retained the King and the Princes at the windows of the palace.

The delirium of this select crowd, principally composed of the noble, rich, and citizen population of the aristocratical quarter adjacent to the palace, rose to the forgetfulness of all propriety and national dignity. The rejoicings, like the excesses, of a people are often characterized by extravagance. The songs, the cries, the tears, the gestures of this multitude no longer sufficing to express their fanaticism, they imitated the example of savage hordes; men and women of the most elevated rank, and bearing the most historical names of France, were seen forming, like the Israelites before the ark of the covenant,

Extravagance of loyal demonstrations.

circles and Bacchanalian groups, and dancing, hand in hand, by the light of torches, before the King and his court. Every time that the prince, who, though pleased, was yet weary of these demonstrations, retired from the balcony to confer with his ministers and officers, he was recalled by fanatical vociferations, to witness some new freaks of madness indicative of the public joy. The King himself, carried away by the energy of these appeals, and by the thousands of hands raised towards him, was forced to descend to the steps of the palace, and to satisfy by a closer view this insatiable thirst of royalty.

This joy was saddening. Reflecting minds did not recognise in these indecent exhibitions of loyal affection of the elegant and aristocratic society of Paris, the decorum of a people whose right of sovereignty had perished on the 20th March; their glory at Waterloo, and their national independence the day before in Paris. A sad resignation, a welcome, tender and reparative, but silent and reserved, had been more worthy of France in the presence of her King, and of all Europe in arms. But there was a retaliation in this delirium; and the King, who witnessed it, ought to have reflected that the parties who indulged in such joys might very soon brood over opposite scenes of vengeance, and demand of him gratifications of hatred which he might have some difficulty in refusing them.

VII.

His first night was disturbed until daybreak by the tumults of these frantic manifestations. He was more a king than ever, for he was king of the hearts of the people. This people, however, was no longer its own master, but delivered a second time to the invasion and the vengeance of armed Europe. It was necessary at once to appease, to disarm, and to dismiss Europe, and to govern this nation, in whose bosom the hundred days had sown the seeds of division, which would make of the second restoration no longer a reign, but only a party and a combat.

Difficulties of the King's position.

The King deeply felt these difficulties, but he felt also, with a most penetrating intelligence, the advantages which his second position held over his first.

On his first accession, a year before, he was unknown to France. He had presented himself as a candidate for the throne, under foreign patronage. He represented in the imagination of France a regime repudiated and superannuated, irreconcilable, perhaps, with the ideas and interests which had sprung up since his emigration. He succeeded a hero who had intoxicated France with the glory and the pride of his conquests, and who had stumbled, for the first time, from victory and the throne. The army of this conqueror, deprived of its chief, but unbroken and imposing still, was an empire within the empire, a pretorian people, with whom it was indispensable to compound, or to retire. Its chiefs, dignitaries, marshals, generals, officers, senators, and even its courtiers, were on foot, united and combined. They had made their conditions with the Restoration, and could command or constrain it, if they did not possess it altogether. The old party or the party of the King, was only received in their suite as a mark of jealous grace and hospitality by the surviving party of the empire. These two parties contended for the ascendancy in the palace, for favours, public employments, and posts in the army. To give a supremacy to the royalists was to alienate the ambitions of the court, the camps, and the administrations of Bonaparte; to give a pre-eminence to the Bonapartists, was to estrange the friends of ancient royalty, and to excite a cry of ingratitude amongst the high nobility, the church, the emigrants, and throughout all Europe. In this position of the King in 1814 there were snares and abysses which it was almost impossible to shun. In some respects he only held a power of attorney from the empire: he was a sort of viceroy of the revolution, a tolerated arbiter between the parties; he was, of himself, only a conciliator, a landlord of the country, he was not master, he was not king.

IX.

The thunderbolt of the 20th March had struck his throne, it was true, but it had, at the same time, thrown a light upon the position. It had distinctly separated, by a bold and irreconcilable aggression, the Royalist and Napoleon elements. It had done more: it had thrown back upon the King's side, through reprobation of the attempt of the 20th March, and through resentment for the national calamities,—the consequences of that attempt,—the opinion of the masses, until then indifferent and undecided. The King who had only been tolerated, or accepted in 1814, was implored for now, and received with acclamations by the almost unanimous voice of the nation. He alone could now effectually throw himself between France vanquished, and Europe provoked. The services which he alone could render consecrated him in the eyes of the nation. He was innocent of its misfortunes; he had not called back Bonaparte, he had not called in the foreigners. Europe had armed of her own accord, for her own safety, and not for the cause of this king, to whose fate it was indifferent. He had not excited civil war in France; he had not retired into Vendée, raising after him one half of his kingdom against the other. He had taken shelter in Belgium, where he remained at the disposal of events and of his people, an afflicted and powerless, but disarmed spectator of the struggle of Bonaparte with Europe. Bonaparte had fallen again, under the weight of his own fault, and of his own impotence. A national cry of distress had recalled Louis XVIII. to Paris, to repair the ruins accumulated by his antagonist. The army had refused to defend the nation, which its defection had given over to the foreigner; the Chambers closed, no longer represented anything but a faction vanquished and discredited by its defeat; the country, of its own full and free will, gave itself to the King. It was less a reign than a dictatorship of public safety which this situation of affairs conferred upon the monarch. He found in it the right of withdrawing his confidence from the men who had deceived him in so barefaced and treacherous

Exigencies of the Royalist party.

a manner. He could be the friend of his friends, the King of his enemies, the absolute arbiter of parties, and no longer the embarrassed negotiator between two causes. In one word, he had compounded in 1814, while in 1815 he was going to reign. Three months of grief and exile had given him the substance of power, of which hitherto he had only had the shadow.

X.

Two dangers alone, still however, menaced him; the exigencies, divested of all shame, of victorious Europe, which sheltering its rigours and its spoliations under the name of the King, would thus associate this name in the mind of the country with the resentment of a conquered nation against the foreigner; and the requirements, devoid of all discretion, of the Royalist party, impolitic and retrograding, of the emigration, represented in his court by the Count d'Artois, his brother, and in the Chamber and the provinces by the nobility and the clergy, whose exclusive influence was dreaded by the country. But he hoped to relieve himself from the first of these difficulties through the patronage of England, through the friendship—cooled but easily regained—of the Emperor Alexander, and through the consummate ability of M. de Talleyrand; and he hoped to prevent the second by the removal of M. de Blacas, by the confidence bestowed upon Fouché—a sacrifice of which the nation was his witness—and finally, by that personal diplomacy, and by that proverbial wisdom with which his years had gifted him. He had a strong belief in his own ability; he had the instinct of governing in difficult times, as he had the ambition natural to his high rank. A spectator and a victim of revolutions, by which he had been long tried and tossed about, a witness of the faults and the ruin of his brother Louis XVI., profoundly convinced of the political incapacity of his other brother, the Count d'Artois, governing his two nephews and his niece by the ascendancy of understanding, of age, and of the throne, he thought himself certain of making all parties feel his inflexible superiority, of restraining some and intimidating others.

Richelieu and Mazarin in one man, but Richelieu without cruelty, Mazarin without baseness, and both in a king.

Such was the opinion which Louis XVIII. had of others and of himself; and this opinion was not without excuse in his nature, and in his intelligence. He had the foremost quality of a king: he affected to believe in the divinity of his right, and he had the most perfect belief in himself.

XI.

But although the second fall of Napoleon, and the second abasement of France had wonderfully smoothed for the King the difficulties of reigning; and although France, to raise herself again from the 20th March, had only to choose between the Bourbons and destruction, something betrayed, even in their recall, the incompatibility which existed since 1789 between renovated France and the dynasty of the old régime. Louis XVIII. returned to the palace of his fathers, but he returned to it supported on one side by a secularised bishop, married, a deserter from his church, a negociator of the revolution in '92, a minister, a favourite, and it may be, even an accomplice, of Napoleon; and supported on the other side by a regicide, just revolted from the Emperor, and who only opened the doors of his palace to the King on the condition of chasing from it the friends of his youth, and making the revolution still reign there under his name.

M. de Blacas being removed, Talleyrand and Fouché, considered necessary by the King to present the guarantees of the revolution in his council, sufficiently told which was the conqueror, which the conquered, of the old or of the modern spirit, even upon a soil occupied and governed by a million of enemies. These two men placed by destiny, as a living derision on either side of the legitimate prince, humbled his triumph. They resembled the ancient insulters placed behind the Roman ovations to remind the conqueror that he was a man, and the King that he was annulled. Louis XVIII. had intelligence enough to comprehend this symbol, pride enough to resent it, ambition enough to endure it, and wisdom enough to interpret

Position of Fouché and Talleyrand.

it in his new reign. His council opened in his presence the following day.

XII.

Three men were already conspiring against one another in this council of the royal government, associating together for a moment through a necessity which counterfeited the concord of ideas: M. de Talleyrand against Fouché, Fouché against Talleyrand, and the King against them both. M. de Talleyrand had too much natural penetration not to understand that by introducing Fouché into the King's council he had taken this minister in the snare of his ambition, and that the scandal attached to his position must engulf him before long. He therefore left it to time to rid him of his rival.

Fouché, in fact, in forcing himself into the King's ministry after his return, had shown a giddiness of ambition which betokened in him more of the mania of importance than of the true genius of circumstances. His part, in whatever view it may be regarded, ought to have finished as soon as he should have replaced the King upon the throne. As a great personage, secluded from public affairs, and decorated with some vain title without functions, or a distinguished embassy in a distant court, he might have fittingly terminated his career. His recompense lay in the gratification of self-love, which his superiority in boldness and intrigue had given him in three epochs: pro-consul under the convention, minister under the destroyer of the Republic, arbiter of two reigns, and master of two revolutions under the second empire, the evil genius of Napoleon, the moderator of the crisis of the 20th March, the restorer of those Bourbons whom he had disdained and proscribed, necessary to the King after having been redoubtable to him, a man retired from the scene where nothing more remained to play but history.

But, to astonish history by an additional boldness of inconsistency, he wished to become the minister of the Bourbons, without a transition of epoch and of circumstances; the Fouché of to-day insolently rejecting his revolutionary costume, and turning himself round in his court finery to outface the Fouché of yesterday. Not only did this indecent versatility

Difficulties of Fouché's policy.

degrade the man, and left no other alternative in looking at him than laughter or indignation, but the situation he aspired to fill was impracticable to the genius even of insolence and intrigue. It was destined in a few days to crumble under him.

If he made himself agreeable to the Bourbons in ministering to their resentments, and making himself the instrument of their policy, he became the proscriber of his own accomplices, and thus lost all popularity and all importance in the revolutionary party. On the other hand, if he spared the revolution, the Empire, and his accomplices of 1793, and of the 20th March, he fell instantly under the suspicion of the King and his party. In either of these hypotheses he was lost. He doubtless flattered himself that he could preserve an equilibrium between the two factions which were going to contend for France; to govern the court party by the intimidation of that of the army, and to domineer over the army party by frightening it with the party of the court: showing to the one side the revolution ready to break forth again, to the other the vengeance of the Royalists ready to annihilate them, and assuming thus the appearance of constraining all by his own dexterity. This part would have been possible for a statesman in 1814, when the foreign armies had retired, and left the King alone and unknown in the presence of his people; but it was no longer so in 1815, when the allied powers, present and in arms around the throne, and occupying every position in the country, answered to the King for the submission of his people, and the immobility of the revolution. These powers did not allow the royalists to dread the movements of public opinion, or revolutionary demonstrations, while encamped for several years upon the soil; and they thus broke the pretended lever of Fouché in his hands. The King had evidently taken him as a flag of truce for the moment between himself and the remains of the Bonapartist insurrection, resolved to dismiss him immediately after he should have entered his capital, disbanded the army proscribed the guilty, and consolidated his throne beneath his feet.

Fouché's opinion of the Bourbons.

By what blindness of understanding could a man so intelligent of instinct, and so experienced in reactions as Fouché believe in the gratitude of courts, in his own importance, and in the durability of the power of a judge of Louis XVI. in the palace even of that King, and in the midst of his brothers, of his nephews, and of his avengers? This cannot be explained by any reasoning of a sound mind: it can only be explained by that giddiness which, at certain moments, seizes upon ambitious men as upon kings, which conceals from their eyes what all the world, by their side, sees clearly, which catches them in their own snares, and punishes them by their own success. Great vices have no more the privilege of infallibility than great virtues. Men, even when they are perverse, are still men; they stumble in their intrigues, deceived by their cupidity, as the best stumble in their candour, deceived sometimes by their virtues. Every thing finishes for all by a decline or by a fall. Such is the law of human affairs: only that posterity elevates some in its esteem, and leaves others illustrious still, but illustrious in its contempt. Such was Fouché.

XIII.

He was intoxicated by the pride of his triumph, and continued to speak of the King with a lightness and disdain which this prince could not be ignorant of, as if he took a pleasure in humbling his master. "All that the Bourbons have hitherto done," he would say, "has only been in opposition to the interests and glory of France. They wished to place the counter-revolution upon the throne; they still wish it, but I am present! I shall oppose it with all my power. There was some talk of substituting a foreign prince for them! Well! that is true. A foreign prince, an Orleans, a regency—there is nothing which the constitutional party would not rather have accepted from the allied powers than them. In that case, at least, it would have been required that the rights of the people should be recognised. They speak of civil war! If it broke out the Bourbons would only have

The convocation of the Chambers resolved upon.

in sixty departments a handful of royalists to oppose to the mass of the people. Draw from my words whatever inference you please," he added, defying the indiscretion of his interlocutors; "that is quite indifferent to me!"

He thought himself sure of finding again in a new Chamber a majority, if not revolutionary, at least constitutional, which would serve him as a bulwark against the court: a Chamber which he would govern by his intrigues and by his creatures, as he had done the Chamber of the hundred days, and which would aid him in intimidating the royalists and governing the King and the court.

M. de Talleyrand, who had occasion for the same sort of bulwark against more distant, but certain misfortunes, with which he felt himself menaced by the spirit of the court, without having any counterpoise in public opinion, had the same hopes in a representation of the country. These two ministers, agreeing in this common interest, immediately agitated in the King's council the question of the prompt convocation of the Chambers. The King himself was anxious to place a National Assembly face to face with the exigencies of the foreigners, that he might not alone bear the responsibility and unpopularity of the sacrifices, and the ransoms of the country.

XIV.

To preserve the existing Chambers would be to capitulate with the revolution and with the empire. To recal the Chambers existing in 1814, and expelled by the 20th March, would be still to recognise the authority of the empire, from which they emanated, and to find, amongst the deputies and the peers, many partisans of Napoleon re-elected after the 20th March, and who had participated in the act of proscription against the Bourbons. The King could not consent to replace with his own hand his enemies in the legislative body, and in the Chamber of Peers, altogether military and imperialist. In the absence of the prescriptions of the charter, orders in council ruled every thing; with the condition, however, that

Constitution of the Chambers of Peers and Deputies.

they should be recognised and constituted laws of the state by the Chambers themselves, immediately on their being assembled.

The Chamber of Peers of 1814, was maintained for all those of its members who had not sat in Napoleon's Chamber of Peers during the hundred days. The Chamber of Deputies of 1814, and the Chamber of Representatives of 1815, were dissolved. The peerage for the future was, in spite of the King's opposition, declared hereditary. A vain institution of feudal and aristocratic England, among a people who had made a revolution for the suppression of castes, and who thus re-established privileges in a legislature by right of birth, and not by right of royal and popular election, and of personal capacity!

Fouché and M. de Talleyrand saw nothing in this disposition but a means of tying up the hands of the King beforehand, and of preventing future ministers, sold to the court, from ruling the Chamber of Peers, by the bait of transmitting the peerage, at the will of the King, from father to son. Above all, they saw in it the advantage of themselves nominating the new peers, of choosing them from the men of the revolution, or of the empire, and of thus securing for themselves powerful adherents in the most elevated political body after the King. The King, who trembled without cause before the shade of the revolution and of the civil war, with which Fouché and M. de Talleyrand frightened him, during the first days of his reign, which was still contested, yielded every thing. He thus beforehand alienated a part of his prerogative and of his liberty

The mode of electing the deputies was determined by other orders in council. The electors were divided into committees of departments, and committees of districts. The district committees presented the candidates to the departmental committees, who chose amongst them one half of the deputies. This graduated election was intended to ensure a representation at once more local and more general. It was a pledge of notoriety, and of presumed capacity required by the law from the representatives of the country. Property

Withdrawal of the French troops behind the Loire.

and taxation always constituted the title to the right of electing and being elected. Taxation to the amount of 300 francs, was the qualification for the departmental electors. The ministers, to flatter the army, and to introduce a new element, presumed to be liberal in the elections, had admitted in the departmental committees the men who were decorated with the order of the Legion of Honour, the civil and military militia of the Emperor. The Chambers were convoked for the 24th September

XV

The French troops under the command of Davoust, retired into cantonments behind the Loire, murmuring but peaceable; sowing in all the departments they passed through and occupied, the remorse of patriotism and of Bonapartism, vanquished and proscribed in them. The populations more distant from the theatre of war, and more indifferent to the dangers which had threatened Paris, attributed to the King and to the royalists, the reverses and the rigours of which they were innocent.

On seeing these fine regiments still unbroken, and whose numbers, horses, and artillery had the aspect of an unconquerable force, but sad and condemned to inaction by treachery, the inhabitants of the towns and country could not understand that those thousands of soldiers, intrepid phalanxes, still fervent in their enthusiasm for the Emperor, could have fled of their own accord before the armies of the coalition, though ten times superior, and thus delivered up the capital, the throne, and the soil to the enemy. They believed, or affected to believe, that this capitulation which had banished the army into their provinces, was a cowardly understanding between the Bourbons and the foreigners, and an expiation for the glory of France, imposed by those who wished to debase it, to make little of and disarm it, in order to possess it.

Symptoms of military insurrection and civil agitation broke out under the footsteps of this army in twenty departments. It seemed every instant ready to draw on the populations or

Disposition of the army and its chiefs.

to allow itself to be drawn on by them, to a renewal of the war. The generals were in correspondence with Paris.

Davoust, though resolved to submit to necessity, with difficulty kept his generals within the limits of their duty: His head quarters were a sort of military government negotiating with the civil government. Privately encouraged in his demands by the insinuations of Fouché and his friends, he made his own conditions and those of the army. He addressed to the King's government demands, through the intervention of three negotiators left by him in Paris on his retirement, to discuss the interests of the army, as he would have discussed the separate interests of a province, or of an empire within the empire.

These three generals were Gerard, Kellermann, and Haxo, all three famous for their talents and their patriotism. They transmitted to the government the wishes and the opinions of the army, and to the army the desires, rather than the orders, of the government. They mutually watched and feared each other, obedience was negotiated for, instead of being enforced. Marshal Davoust resembled one of those Roman generals at the head of undecided legions, obedient only to the order which they themselves had imposed upon the senate. In reality, however, Davoust submitted to play this part rather than solicited it.* Moved by the misfortunes of his country, and convinced that a renewal of the war, though favourable to his popularity and his fame, would only be a prolongation of the agony of France, he occupied himself, while saving appearances, but with sincere self-denial, in pacifying the spirit of the army, and calming its anger by concessions.

XVI.

His orders of the day from Orleans and Tours, testified these efforts to soothe the excitement of the chiefs and the soldiers. "The commissioners," he said to the troops, "assure us that a reaction is not to be apprehended; that passions will be kept down, men respected, and principles preserved; that there will be no arbitrary dismissals in the army, and that

Address of the army to the King.

its honour will be shielded. As a pledge of this," he added, "we have the nomination of Marshal St. Cyr to the ministry of war; and that of Fouché to the ministry of police. These conditions are acceptable. The national interest ought frankly to unite the army with the King. This interest requires some sacrifices; let us make them with a modest energy. The army unbroken and united will become, if necessary, the rallying point of the French, and even of the royalists! Let us unite; let us press together; let us never separate; let us be French! This has been, as you know, the first wish of my heart, and it will never quit me but with my last sigh!"

These noble words were appreciated by the mass of the army, which began to feel its fault, and to afflict itself for the calamities it had brought upon the country. It responded to them by a great act of repentance and submission, transmitted to the commissioners, by the generals commanding divisions and by the commissioners to the marshal, to be forwarded by him to the King.

"Sire!" said this patriotic manifesto of the army to the throne: "full of confidence in your generosity, resolved to prevent civil war by rallying around you, and of recalling by its example those of your subjects whom circumstances may have alienated from you, the army flatters itself that you will receive its submission with benevolence, and that, casting a veil over the past, you will not close your heart to any of your children."

This act did honour to the army, and moved the King and all France. The following day Marshal Davoust, venturing still further, imposed upon the army the spontaneous change of its colours.

"Soldiers," said he, "it remains to complete the act of submission that you have just made, by an act of obedience, painful but necessary! Hoist the white flag! I know that in this I ask of you a great sacrifice! For five-and-twenty years we have all stood by these colours which we have borne; but this sacrifice is demanded of us by the interest of our country. I am incapable, soldiers, of giving you an

Reprisals of the allied powers.

order that would be at variance with honour. Preserve to our country a numerous and a gallant army!"

XVII.

The last words of the generalissimo were understood before he had uttered them. The King was already oppressed, and even insulted in Paris by the insolent reprisals of Blücher. The bridge of Jena, in front of the Champ-de-Mars, denounced by this barbarian to his soldiers, mined, and charged with powder, to bury in the ruins of this monument the name of the battle which had annihilated Prussia, had only been saved by the supplication of the King to the Emperor Alexander, and by the threat, more theatrical than rational, which he held out, of placing himself upon the bridge at the moment of the explosion, to perish with a monument of his kingdom, shielded by his majesty and his life.

The monuments of the arts, bronzes, marbles, pictures, statues, antique cars, the spoils of the nations, of the capitals, the palaces, the museums, and the libraries of Europe, accumulated in the Louvre, and in the public squares, by victory, were reclaimed and taken back in open day, by the armed soldiers of the nations and of the princes from whom they had been conquered. Conquest was taking away what had been taken away by conquest. These trophies went back from Paris to Rome, to Florence, to Vienna, to Berlin, to Turin, and to Madrid. They were not regarded as property; they were the spoils of war. The vicissitude of fate constituted all the right of the possessors. Impartial equity could not legitimately accuse the former proprietors of these *chefs d'œuvre* for seizing them again, and carrying back to their capitals and countries the treasures which had been ravished from them. The sword had been the only title; and in turn it produced, not a retaliation—for French property and national monuments were respected—but the violent restitution of the spoils. Conscience admitted this; but national pride murmured even to the apprehension of a desperate insurrection in Paris.

The artistic as well as military genius of France was

Rigour of the Prussians.

attached to these pictures, these marbles, and these bronzes with more passion, and with a passion more noble, than was felt for treasures and for territories. It was less bitter, and it seemed less humiliating, to give up provinces and kingdoms than pictures and statues. The people thought their hearths and altars were violated, and that their national chattels, sold by auction amongst barbarian soldiers, would testify for ever to Europe their defeat and humiliation. The sculptors and painters were indignant. Poetry wept in the elegies, at once sad and avenging, of Casimir Delavigne, entitled *Masséniennes*, at the devastation of the Louvre, and the emigration of the marble gods and goddesses.

M. de Talleyrand had too just an appreciation of the situation of affairs, and too much the habit of discussing questions of public right, to contest with the allies this restitution which they were making with their own hands. He would have had nothing but sophistry to oppose to reason; he therefore shut his eyes to the abduction of these spoils. He despised the murmurs of the people; and as if he had disdained being moved by such a trifle, he affected to reply to those who came to acquaint him with the excitement of the capital, and to beg of him to interfere in the name of France and of the King. "It is no business of mine!" He was right. To resist was impossible, to supplicate would be base, to lament humiliating. There was nothing for it but to be silent and turn away the eyes

XVIII.

But the allies, when once occupying Paris *en masse*, and successively covering all the provinces with their armies, imposed subsidies, oppressed the towns and the country with requisitions of every description, emptied the public coffers for the payment of their troops, domineered, exhausted, and devastated the dwellings of the rich and the poor. The Prussians, above all, whether they had more to avenge for the dismemberment and spoliation of their own country, or whether that people, more warlike than the other Germanic races, have in their nature more of this bitterness of oppression and exaction that

Brutalities of Blücher.

are contracted in camps, signalised themselves, as in 1814, by cruelties and brutalities, which made their occupation the more dreaded, and their name the more odious in France. They had imposed 100,000,000 of francs on the city of Paris, the day they entered it. The prefects appointed by the King, the mayors of the towns and villages, could not shield their departments, their towns, and their villages, against these insatiable requirements and depredations. The Prussians treated France, although reconciled by the convention of St. Cloud, and by the presence of the King, as a conquered country. They did not recognise in it the kingdom of a king, their ally, but the spoil of Napoleon their enemy. They laid their hands on several prefects, who, with a courageous independence, had dared to resist, made them prisoners, and removed them from their provinces.

A unanimous cry of grief, distress, and indignation arose to the King from all the provinces occupied by them and by the Austrians, who were not so harsh, to implore protection, or to threaten an insurrection of despair.

The Duke of Wellington, more modest in victory, and more guarded in his occupation, preserved the English outside Paris in a strictness of discipline, which respected the dwellings or the citizens and the authority of the King, whom, while re-establishing, he wished to make popular. He acted like an ally with Louis XVIII. after having acted like a conqueror with Napoleon. He did not offend, but frequently consulted with the government of the King, which he sustained against the brutalities of Blücher. In spite of his observations, the Prussian general threatened to seize upon the treasury, and to carry off the public coffers, if the city of Paris did not pay him the 100,000,000 which he had imposed upon it on his entrance. The presence of his King and of the Emperor of Russia, who at length arrived in Paris, restrained the reprisals of the Prussian general.

The war impost of Prussia on Paris was reduced by 10,000,000. But Blücher had pillaged the manufactories of arms at Versailles, and some private houses of this royal residence had been ransacked by his soldiers.

XIX.

During this concentration of sovereigns and commanders-in-chief in Paris, Europe, which the 20th March had placed entirely under arms and set in motion, continued to advance from all the frontiers upon the French territory. The provinces could scarcely contain this flowing tide of nations, eager to come, even after the termination of the struggle, to avenge themselves for the terror with which the landing of Napoleon had inspired the world. The allies divided the whole space of the country amongst them. The English, the Belgians, the Dutch, and the Hanoverians were distributed amongst all the cities and all the provinces which extend from Paris to the Belgian frontier. The Prussians encamped *en masse* in Paris, and spread from thence between the Loire and the ocean. The Austrians, the Bavarians, and the Wirtemburghers were cantoned in Burgundy, the Nivernese, the Lyonnese, and Dauphiny. The Austrian and Piedmontese army of Italy were quartered in Provence and in Languedoc. The Russians covered with their numerous *corps d'armée* Lorraine and Champagne; the Saxons and Badenese occupied Alsatia; the Hungarians the borders of the Mediterranean; the Spaniards the flanks of the French Pyrenees, Navarre and Roussillon.

Never since the great invasion of the Barbarians, who had driven away the primitive populations, and supplied their place on the soil, had such an inundation of armed nations overwhelmed the French territory. The maledictions of the people arose on every side against the man whose impatience to reconquer the throne had opened the floodgates of this torrent of people, and given to the world a pretext for this universal inundation.

XX.

The King—with a territory thus invaded under his feet, and with a people divided in opinion, exhausted of money and of blood, disarmed, expelled from their fortresses, occupied in its capital and in all its great centres of energy, as Lyons, Stras-

Perplexities of the King's position.

burg, and Lille—in insurrection for his cause in the west and south—quivering in the east and behind the Loire for the cause of his enemy—could only lament and submit.

An act of desperate energy, it has been said, could have thrown him into the bosom of the army of the Loire, which, recruited by the Vendéans, and mingling the two flags in one common patriotism, might have imposed respect and moderation upon the allies. But this plan, dreamt of by some generals of the army of the Loire, and by some Vendéan chiefs, eager to bear their share of patriotism in the calamities of France, was but a chimera which vanished in the first moment of reflection. To abandon Paris was to abandon the throne; for, after giving up three-fourths of the French provinces and the capital, it would be necessary to re-conquer them from more than a million of foreigners, masters of the fortified places, of the arms, of the treasury, and of the taxes. With what force could the King attempt such an enterprise? With forty or fifty thousand men, the wrecks of Napoleon's army, and with some thousands of peasants of Brittany for auxiliaries; and supposing an impossible success, in what state would the King find his kingdom? Ravaged and torn to pieces by this million of enemies! The whole of France would have been changed into one vast battle-field after the struggle. It was proposing to him the conflagration of his kingdom by his own hand. Nothing was possible for the King, after Waterloo and the submission of Paris, except to retire from the throne to avoid witnessing the oppression of his kingdom, or to treat in his own name, and in the name of his people, with the allies, to reduce the ransom, and soften the rigours inseparable from occupation: a painful but essential part, the necessity for which the nation felt, excused its rigours, and thanked from their hearts their unfortunate King.

XXI.

But the presence of this army of Napoleon, though now submissive to the King, assembled on one single point of the

Disbanding of the French army.

kingdom, behind a great river, backed by warlike provinces, such as Brittany and Auvergne, still, however, alarmed the allied powers. The council of sovereigns therefore required the King to disband it.

"The treaty of alliance concluded at Vienna between the great powers," wrote the Russian plenipotentiary—M. de Nesselrode to M. de Talleyrand, "was concluded against Bonaparte and his adherents, and above all, against the French army, whose disorderly ambition, and insatiable thirst of conquest, have frequently disturbed all Europe. Urged by the necessity of universal peace, the Emperor of Russia and his allies make the disbanding of this army an imperative condition, as well for the interest of the King of France as for that of the peace of nations."

The King, who could only see in the army of Bonaparte a remnant of pretorians who would perpetuate the fanaticism of his competitor to the throne, and the opposition to his race and to his reign, must himself have anxiously wished for the disbanding of this army, and its transformation into a territorial and royalist body. He therefore hastened to yield to the injunction of the allied powers, which was in all respects conformable to his own interests.

The disbanding of the army of the Loire was accordingly declared. The regiments were organised in eighty-six departmental legions of three battalions each, and in fifty-two regiments of cavalry and artillery. To destroy the *esprit de corps*, that inextinguishable tradition of troops which survives the men, and still lives on in the colours and the name of armed bodies, each of the legions was to be composed of soldiers born in the department of which it bore the name—an excellent method of stifling Bonapartism in these corps, and to substitute for it the spirit of the country to which each belonged. It was an adroit method of creating royalist legions, at least in the west and south, but a certain element likewise of civil war, in case of a conflict of opinions between the different parts of France; a fatal institution also on another account, because it was in its essence more federative than national, and because, by creating a provincial spirit in the members of the army, it tended to

Opening of diplomatic conferences.

weaken the spirit of national unity, which constitutes its strength against factions and foreign enemies.

Marshal Macdonald was charged with the disbanding and the reorganising of the army.

XXII.

It was essential, before anything else, to fix in a definitive treaty of peace the situation of France and of its monarch, with reference to the allied powers. Until this treaty was discussed and signed France only existed as a conquered country, its King as an officious commissioner between his people and Europe. M. de Talleyrand, happy to escape the difficulties of the home government, which were left to Fouché, became entirely absorbed in this negotiation, which was the principal occupation also of the King. The Congress of Vienna, interrupted by the 20th March, and aggravated by Waterloo, was therefore resumed at Paris.

The diplomatic conferences between M. de Talleyrand and the European plenipotentiaries were opened at the residence of Lord Castlereagh, prime minister of England, to which the deference of the sovereigns for the conqueror of Waterloo left the paramount direction of the negotiations. M. de Talleyrand, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Castlereagh, M. de Metternich, M. de Weissemberg, M. de Hardenberg, M. de Humboldt, Prince Rasoumowski, M. de Nesselrode, M. Capo d'Istria, M. de Gentz, a German publicist, M. Pozzo di Borgo, and some of the generals most versed in the secret policy of their respective cabinets, assembled there for several hours each day.

They began by regulating according to conventions the requisitions, which until then had been arbitrary, and also the departments assigned to the different *corps d'armées* in the territory of France. They afterwards deliberated on the fate of Napoleon, who was then still in a state of indecision on the British coast. He was declared the prisoner of war of Europe, his custody confided to England, and his residence fixed at the island of St. Helena. Peace between France and England was on the instant re-established; Great Britain having declared

Their progress.

war against Napoleon alone, the cause of it was removed in his person.

M. de Talleyrand, by way of fostering a noble feeling of humanity, of which England had taken the initiative, under the religious inspiration of Wilberforce and its philosophers, admitted, in the name of France, the principle of the abolition of the infamous slave-trade.

XXIII.

It was then asked if the allies had made war for the purpose of conquest, or for the re-establishment, pure and simple, of European order, disturbed by Napoleon. The great powers, more generous, consented to admit the latter principle. The little ones, more envious and ambitious, contested it. The Netherlands demanded the restitution of Alsatia, of Lorraine, of Flanders, and of Artois, to their ancient possessors. "Conquest," they said, "has the right to retrieve conquest."

Prussia supported the Netherlands by its organ, M. de Humboldt; and she demanded the cession of Montmédy, Metz, Sarrelouis, and Thionville.

M. de Metternich demanded, in the name of Austria, a territorial indemnity, a guarantee for permanent security, a form of government reconcilable with the neighbouring governments, and immediate measures of military police to repress the attempts of the army.

The King of Sardinia reclaimed Savoy, which had been left to France by the treaty of 1814. England and Russia asked for nothing.

These demands, on their amicable representation, were reduced to the demolition of Huningen, an indemnity of 600,000,000 of francs for the expenses of the war, of 200,000,000 to construct new fortified places against any future aggressions of France, an occupation during seven years of a portion of French territory, by 150,000 troops of the coalition, maintained at the expense of France, and commanded by general conjointly named by the allies; finally, an important dismemberment of the north of France, in behalf of the Ne-

The ultimatum of the allied powers.

therlands, by the cession of Condé, Philippeville, Givet, and Maubeuger

XXIV.

M. de Talleyrand confided in the impartial friendliness of the Duke of Wellington, to combat the injurious and iniquitous enormity of these conditions. The King himself took an active personal part in the private conferences with the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, and above all, with the Emperor Alexander, the most generous and the most influential prince of the coalition. He brought to bear also upon the heart of this prince, the mystic influence of Madame de Krudener, that Christian sibyl, who replaced in the soul of the Emperor of Russia all human ambition by religious aspirations for the foundation in Europe of an order moral and intellectual.

The Duke of Wellington and the Emperor Alexander nobly interceded with Europe, not to abuse victory too rigidly against a prince innocent of the attempt of Napoleon, and against a nation subdued by its own army, and which had suffered rather than conspired for this attempt. The ultimatum of the allied powers, to which Russia and England thought it their duty to adhere, out of regard for their allies more than from hostility to France, was concocted amongst them, and concealed for more than a month from M. de Talleyrand and the King.

It came out at length, at the beginning of September, and threw the King into a state of consternation. It comprised the conditions, scarcely alleviated, enumerated above: a partial dismemberment, an indemnity of 1000,000,000 of francs, an occupation of seven years, France redeemed from partition by disarmament, ruin, and shame; and the redemption signed by a king who, in redeeming his country, seemed thus to preserve his throne at the expense of his people.

Louis XVIII. shed bitter tears in secret, and but ill concealed his despair from his familiar adherents. "My place," he often exclaimed, "should be at Hartwell, or with the army of the Loire. My allies ruin, in affecting to save

Feelings of the King towards M. de Talleyrand.

me." Had this prince listened to this noble despair of his heart, and had he given up to the allies a throne too dear at the price they demanded, he would have lost this throne for a few days, perhaps; but Europe embarrassed, and France excited, would have restored to him his kingdom on more worthy conditions. The inspirations of honour are the only certain ones in similar extremities. To declare themselves the prisoners of Europe would have been better for Louis XVIII. and for his family than to appear its accomplice in the debasement and spoliation of his country

XXV

Instead of being irritated against himself, the King conceived a profound resentment at the impotence, or the inability of M. de Talleyrand. Want of success readily becomes a crime in statesmen, as well as warriors. Moreover M. de Talleyrand was a secret burthen upon the self-love and the dignity of Louis XVIII. This statesman was a necessity, but an onerous and importunate one; for his superiority was too ill disguised in the council, not to overshadow somewhat the superiority of the King.

M. de Talleyrand was of high birth, and the great lord appeared in the minister, as well as the condescending one in his services. He recollected, and he made the King recollect, that it was by the aid of his hand he had mounted his throne, and that it was by the hand of M. de Blacas that he had descended from it. The advice he gave in the council was brief and imperious; he did not discuss, he prescribed. More experienced in modern men and things than Louis XVIII., more influential with the allied sovereigns and their ministers than the King, he exercised, by his obtruded ascendancy rather a patronage than a ministry. The power lay in his name, more than in his title of president of the council. The King, obliged to conciliate him, in consequence of his presumed capacity in public affairs, was not sorry to find that capacity at fault, that he might ascribe, in the eyes of the multitude, the misfortunes of the negociation to the negociator,

Character of M. de Talleyrand.

and appear compelled by the interest of the state to dismiss a minister who resembled too much a mayor of the palace.

XXVI.

It must be acknowledged, moreover, that M. de Talleyrand, so useful at the Congress of Vienna as a negotiator, had not evinced, either in 1814, or since the second return of the King in 1815, as minister, any of those high qualities which constitute the statesman in constitutional countries. He had neither the initiative, nor activity, nor eloquence, those three essentials of parliamentary governments. The *laissez-faire*, the superb indolence, and the intelligent silence formed his nature, his ability, and his tactics. Now, these three virtues of an indolent mind, which are excellent in times when the vessel of the state sails in its right course of itself, were insufficient at this tempestuous period, when it was often necessary to seek out a passage and work the ship amidst rocks and contrary winds. There are moments when it is requisite to grasp time as it flies, and to seize on opinions as it were by main force. M. de Talleyrand loved to slumber, and counted greatly upon that secret progress of events, which does much it is true, but not all. The advantage of time, indolently waited for, and adroitly gathered in, constituted at least one half of his fame for ability.

No man was ever more indebted for his fame to providence. When time operated for him under the active hand of Napoleon, all went well; but since the spirit of the court in the palace, and the spirit of faction in parties, had decomposed the national spirit under the eyes and under the hand of a drowsy government, it was quite the contrary. The minister was a looker-on of the decline of the throne, and of the people; and by not impressing upon the government any decisive course of action, he allowed it inevitably to sink by intestine vices which corrupted every thing, and by extreme difficulties which continually increased. Nature, moreover, had not given him the necessary courage to make a figure in the tribune, or the gift of eloquence in the presence of

Contemplated retirement of M. de Talleyrand.

public assemblies. He always required to have some one in advance of him, and was more a prompter than an actor in the great political dramas he had witnessed. Without fire in his heart, without passion, or warmth of eloquence, how could he have warmed, excited, and impassioned any assembly of men? Impartiality is never eloquent, because eloquence is only the result of conviction: the tribune would therefore have only placed his inferiority in a stronger light in the presence of an opposition, or of contending parties. Now the hour of oratory was about to strike; the elections were preparing, the factions were forming, France was about to recover her voice. The King felt that M. de Talleyrand would be mute before the questions which would not fail to be showered upon him. M. de Talleyrand himself must have been intimidated at the new part which the Chambers were about to impose upon him. This part he never had been able to attempt even in the vigour of his youth and of his ambition in the Constituent Assembly, where he concealed himself behind Mirabeau. How then could he attempt it now? To what a fall from his high prestige was he not about to expose himself? He preferred rather to fall opportunely by the discontent of the King, than a few days later by his own insufficiency.

Such were the motives which made the King wish for the retirement of his prime minister, a step which was as much desired by M. de Talleyrand himself. There was another reason still imperceptible to the court, but already powerful in the heart of the King. This was the sudden, lively, and profound inclination which he had conceived some days back for a new favourite; for no other name can be given to the feeling which attracted him towards a young man he had scarcely seen, and who was already become necessary to him; this was M. Decazes.

XXVII.

Louis XVIII., like princes in general who are born near the throne, brought up in leading-strings, in the effeminacy of education, and in the etiquette of courts, which separates a man

The King in his friendship.

from the rude contact of ordinary life, had something effeminate in his character. His mind wanted that manly tenderness of which infirmity had deprived his body. He had not enough of it for love, that powerful luxury of great natures; but he had enough for friendship. His friendships, by their concentration and by their fidelity, readily grew to passion and favouritism, and he honoured them by his constancy.

In his youth he had cultivated the society of some ladies, rather than been in love with them; amongst others, the Marquise de Balby, whose wit was more dazzling even than her beauty. After these, M. d'Avaray and M. de Blacas had been the objects of this obstinacy in his friendships. M. d'Avaray, who merited this sentiment by his gentleness and grace, and M. de Blacas, who merited it by his fidelity, had been snatched away from him, the one by death, the other by unpopularity, to which it had been necessary to sacrifice him, or else to renounce the throne.

Madame de Balby was still alive, but she had grown old, and private feelings of resentment which sprung up during the emigration, seemed to have removed her for ever from the court and heart of the King. He had therefore no domestic friendship in the palace where he had formerly opened his mind and his heart to cherished confidants on the subjects of his mental troubles, his political ambitions, and his literary labours. He could no longer find in the family by which he was surrounded, the same friendship, secure confidence, and outpourings of affection. He deemed himself, and was, in fact, very superior in intellect and faculties to the other members of his house.

He was very fond of his niece, the Duchess d'Angoulême; but she was cold, reserved, restrained, and lofty in her horror—very natural in the daughter of such dear victims—of those compacts and compromises with the revolution, and the men of the revolution, which the King was compelled to justify through policy, and to submit to. Her presence was often a silent reproach to him, especially since he had admitted M. de Talleyrand and Fouché into his councils. That which is dreaded is not long beloved.

Character of the members of the royal family.

His nephew, the Duke d'Angoulême, was more agreeable to him, by the modest gravity, the attitude of respectful deference for the wisdom on the throne, and the gentleness and obedience of his character. He was, the King said, his *Germanicus*. But the intellect of the Duke d'Angoulême, less elevated than his soul, was too inferior to that of his uncle to admit of a communion of mind between him and the King.

The Duke de Berry, his other nephew, was brave and intelligent; but frivolous, rough, and addicted to pleasure, from the passions of his age and the idleness of his life. The King left him to the enjoyment of his military tastes and the caprices of his heart; he made him the Alcibiades of his dynasty, and gave him up to the admiration and malice of youth.

The princes of the house of Condé, either superannuated or mere ciphers, were consigned with some old men and women of their posthumous court, to their huntings and banquets at Chantilly.

The Duke d'Orleans would have had more conformity of views, more equality of mind with the King, and more allurements for his opinions; but he was to the royal house a living souvenir of his father, so fatal to the family of Louis XVI.; and, moreover, it was suspected that he indulged the hope of a personal usurpation. Nobody loves a rival, or confides in a competitor. The Duke d'Orleans was pardoned, loaded with honours, endowed with possessions, favours, and riches; but he was kept at a distance, as well with a view to his own popularity, as by the politic prudence of the King.

XXVIII.

There remained the Count d'Artois, the brother and eventual successor of the King upon the throne. The King loved him, in spite of his inferior intellect, and perhaps for that very reason, as it prevented his fearing him. There was friendship in this relationship. Sure of the heart of this brother, who had shared his exile and misfortunes, he saw in him a witness of his early splendour, a survivor of the old

The Count d'Artois and his court.

court, a companion of the same adversities; but with the Count d'Artois he had only these ties of blood, of affection, of recollections, of community, and of fortune. Political opinions separated the two brothers, if the term opinion may be applied to the habits of thinking of the Count d'Artois, imbibed ready-made from his birth, nurtured by the prejudices and thoughtlessness of his early youth, preserved in mature age by his exclusive association with the exiled nobility and priesthood, the most irreconcilable with the new spirit of the age; and brought back from exile to the palace to be made use of by all the flatterers of decayed old times, and all the fabricators of intrigue.

XXIX.

Since his return from Ghent, although he had not murmured too loudly at Arnouville against the prostration of Louis XVIII., and against the necessity for Fouché, this prince had resumed, immediately after the King's return to the Tuileries, his customary circle of royalist ringleaders, and his habits of underhand opposition to the government of his brother, which constituted him the consolation of the old court, the hope of the aspirations of the aristocracy and the church, and the involuntary instrument of men to whom these two causes were indifferent, but who flattered them to aggrandize themselves.

The right wing of the palace of the Tuileries, called the Pavillon Marsan, was the residence of the Count d'Artois, and the focus of this little emigrant court in the midst of a revolutionized country. The political man of this intestine faction of the palace was once more M. de Vitrolles. This personage had served in 1814, as a confidential messenger between M. de Talleyrand and the Count d'Artois. He had opened, with more zeal than real utility, some channels of communication between the disaffected Bonapartists, the foreign diplomatists, and the prince, for a restoration, which did not depend upon the success of his petty schemes, but on the defeat, or the victory of Napoleon. After Waterloo, he had again insinuated himself into the confidence of Fouché, and he had been the official, or officious negociator of the overtures of this minister to the

Their intrigues.

king and the princes. This last service had seemed to give him a further claim to the confidence and the gratitude of the Count d'Artois. M. de Vitrolles had evidently no other political ability than his insinuating spirit and his royalist zeal; for he had been the first to mix up the cause of pure monarchy with the intrigue, abounding in constitutional concessions, of M. de Talleyrand's party, of which he was the voluntary agent in 1814; whilst in 1815, he mixed up the cause of pure monarchy with the intrigue, full of revolutionary concessions and of compromises with the cabinet of Fouché, the secrets of which he had equally received and carried backwards and forwards.

But M. de Vitrolles had, over all those men of the old school who surrounded the Count d'Artois at the Pavilion Marsan, the advantage which a young and active man, who has remained in France and mingled in everything, must have over expatriated men who know not on what to depend in a country of unknown politics. The prince thought he had occasion for him, to serve him with eyes, with tongue, and with hand, amidst the clouds of the revolutionary world through which he pretended he could penetrate. M. de Talleyrand and Fouché had scarcely begun to reign without rivals in the cabinet formed by the King at Arnouville, when the circle of the Count d'Artois, consigned to the inactivity and discontent of their political extinction, conspired against the ministry, and began to hatch political plans and ministries, by which this party of superannuated men, or of new men, ardent in intrigues, would save, as they said, the monarchy in spite of the King.

XXX.

The principal men of this budding opposition of the palace, of which M. de Vitrolles was the soul and the moving power, reckoned amongst them M. d'Ambray, a retired chancellor of 1814, and M. Ferrand, a man of factitious reputation, created by the royalist party that it might boast a publicist of its own, although Bonaparte had also taken into his service, and into his superstitious principles of despotism of M. Ferrand.

The men of the opposition.

M. de Fontanes, more enlightened, but burning to obtain the pardon of his partiality for the Emperor, by the purity and the ardour of his royalist principles.

The Duke de Lévis, a man of the old court, with an upright mind, delicate, studious, and literary, but with a constitution too feeble to bear the weight of politics.

M. Bourrienne, a clever renegade from the cabinet of the Emperor into that of the princes, his enemies, possessing all the desperate zeal of renegades.

M. Alexis de Noailles, a young man of great name, of generous courage, and of an activity which equalled his zeal; who had signalised himself by the boldness of his faith against the Emperor's persecutions of the church and its pontiff; and who was one of the first to throw himself, sword in hand, in 1814, before the Count d'Artois and the monarchy of his fathers.

Finally, M. de Chateaubriand, who had returned discontented from Ghent, feeling himself by his genius equal to great political parts, not disdaining fortune in the midst of ambition, excluded from public affairs by the horror he had dared to evince against Fouché, by the indifference of M. de Talleyrand, who did not sufficiently appreciate him, and by the instinctive repulsion of Louis XVIII., who did not like him. Princes, great by convention, are unwittingly jealous of genius, great by nature. No other motive can be found for this aversion of Louis XVIII. to M. de Chateaubriand, who had devoted himself to this prince, even to calumny against Bonaparte, and who only asked to rivet himself to him by all his devotion, and by every ambition of fame and of power.

XXXI.

In this opposition camp were found other men of inferior note, such as M. Laborie, the friend and colleague of Messrs. Bertin in the *Journal des Debats*, a man famous for scenting an intrigue, and drawing closer the strings which tie the knot of it.

M. de La Maisonfort, of a trivial but sparkling genius, who could assume gravity on occasion, suspected by Louis XVIII. of

M. Decazes.

intriguing, during the emigration, with Fauche-Borel, and other officious agents of supposed negotiations, to give themselves importance. M. de La Maisonfort had attached himself to the Count d'Artois, more credulous than his brother, and more surrounded by intermeddlers. He had written in 1814 a royalist pamphlet, which had contested with that of M. de Chateaubriand the enthusiasm of the friends of the Bourbons. Having returned to France with the princes, and being unknown to the new men, he was looked upon as a political oracle, when he was only a playful wit, a courtier of the court of Charles II.

Messrs. de Polignac, brought up in the court of the Count d'Artois, living souvenirs of his youth, men of honour and of fanatical zeal, still too young to allow people to judge of their political importance; M. de Juigné, M. de Bruges, and M. de Boisgelin. None of the men of this court, and of these opinions, were calculated to offer to Louis XVIII. the favourite in whom he could repose at once his policy, his intellect, and his heart. Chance, however, presented him with one.

XXXII.

We have said that the day before the King's entry into Paris the council of ministers, looking for a prefect of police, bold, intelligent, and sure, to dissolve the Chambers, to appease the murmurs of the people, and to smoothe and secure the route of Louis XVIII. from Arnouville to the Tuileries, had appointed M. Decazes to fill these functions. We have seen with what ardour to serve, and with what resolution of head and heart, this young man had solicited from Fouché, his superior in the police department, the honour and the responsibility of this task. Since that day M. Decazes had redoubled his zeal, enlightened the government, baffled the remnants of the factions, deserved well of the ministry, and better still of the King and the royalists.

The prefect of police, from the subordinate though important nature of his functions, was not in the habit of seeing the King. He reported his labours to the minister of police,

Origin of M. Decazes' favour with the King.

who imparted them to the King in council. But an imaginary attempt to poison the Emperor Alexander having alarmed for a moment the aides-de-camp of this prince at the Elysée, and M. Decazes having, in his quality of director of the police, to probe this affair and demonstrate its puerility, the King, uneasy at the rumours to which this event gave rise in Paris, and wishing to evince to the Emperor Alexander all the solicitude he felt for the safety of so august a guest, summoned M. Decazes, to receive from his own mouth the details of this event.

The countenance of the young prefect of police, his attitude, at once timid and assiduously attentive, his elocution, clear and refined, the sound of his voice, which evinced feeling and respect, struck the King at once. He was pleased to prolong the audience, in order to prolong the pleasure of the conference, and to study the man. In short, Decazes pleased him; and to please a King is speedily to govern under his name. This sudden impression was justified by many gifts of nature and of character.

XXXIII.

M. Decazes was the son of a magistrate of Libourne, in the department of the Gironde, a part of France which more than any other produces those unexpected pieces of good fortune and rapid elevation—the fruits of a bold ambition, of southern aptitude, and of that insinuating suppleness of character peculiar to those people who drink the waters of the Pyrenees. He possessed the graces, the felicitous disposition, and the natural abilities of this race, who are found everywhere in our history, in our camps, in our courts, in our ministries, and in our public assemblies, from Henri IV. down to Murat or Barrère; faithful to success, versatile as fortune, floating on the surface, like all light things, in every shipwreck of governments, institutions, and dynasties—the adventurous race of France. The Gironde, the Garonne, and the Lot seem to communicate to it something of the volubility and inconsistency of their waves. These rivers impart an intoxication of eloquence and ambition to all who live upon their banks.

Destined by his father for an humble provincial magistracy.

His antecedents.

M. Decazes visited Paris during the last years of the Empire, he studied the law there, and succeeded, through some influence, in getting a clerkship in the office of the minister of justice. Some years after, M. Muraire, first president of the Court of Cassation,* gave him the hand of his daughter, who was smitten with the young legist. This marriage opened the door to further favours, and he was nominated a judge of one of the inferior tribunals of Paris. He then became secretary to the Emperor's mother, in the avenues of the imperial court, from which he progressed, with the same title, into the court—more initiated in public affairs and intrigues—of the palace of the King of Holland, and of the Queen Hortense, his wife; remarked by the men, and agreeable to the women, a welcome guest wherever he was introduced. A premature death deprived him of his first wife. He evinced such profound grief, and so impassioned a fidelity, both to her memory and to her family, that he became in the political world a celebrity of conjugal devotion. For some years after he continued, under the auspices of his father-in-law, his double career in the magistracy and the court. In 1814 his fortune did not follow that of his protectors, but turning completely round, with his province in the south, warmly entered the cause of the new princes. He presented to Louis XVIII. the deputations from his department, he harangued him in the name of his native town, and received as a reward of his zeal a decoration from the hand of the King. But, confounded at that period with the crowd of fugitive presentations which besieged the palace, he was recompensed without being remarked.

XXXIV.

The return of Napoleon from the Isle of Elba did not deceive either his conscience or his precocious judgment; he only saw in it a crime and a folly. He took arms like a brave citizen, at the head of the young students of the schools of Paris, and proposed to the government a levy *en masse* of

* Court of Appeal.

Portrait of M. Decazes.

volunteer youths, to oppose the children of the country to the pretorians of the Isle of Elba. After Bonaparte's entry into Paris, he alone opposed, in the assembly of his colleagues of the tribunal, the proposition made by the president, to lay the homage of their body and the oath of fidelity at the feet of the conqueror. "I have never learned from my masters," he said, "nor from myself, that the legitimacy of power was the reward of the race." This expression exposed him to the anger of the Emperor, who banished him to a distance of forty leagues from Paris. The young exile did not obey the mandate, but hastened to Bordeaux, associated himself with the intrepid protestations of M. Lainé, and with this citizen, of a truly antique virtue, relumed in every heart, during the hundred days, the fire of independence and of fidelity to the legitimate King in this portion of the south. His civic courage, rare at the time, and his disinterested fidelity, served him better than versatility and ambition would have done. On the return of Louis XVIII. when new and devoted men were sought after, his name and actions were remembered. We have seen how the hand of M. de Talleyrand and that of Fouché accidentally fell upon him.

XXXV.

M. Decazes was at this time thirty-five years of age, but appeared ten years younger than his contemporaries. His figure, slender and supple, the elegance of his gait, the proud carriage of his head, and the natural nobility of his attitude, indicated less the magistrate than the diplomatist or the military man. His lofty forehead, his flaxen hair, his eyes of a lively and limpid blue, his mouth, in which the severity of the lips was unbent by the grace of his smile, the oval somewhat lengthened of his visage, the slightly feminine tint of the man of study, relieved in colour by the blood of the south; a physiognomy generally of all those traits and tints which could not be looked on without impression and attraction, constituted M. Decazes, at this period of his life the living portrait of the favourite predestined by nature for the infatuation of a court; a Cinq-Mars, or a Leicester, according as he should happen to

His mind and character.

enchain the heart of a queen, or to fascinate the mind of a monarch:

His heart and his understanding responded to these external symptoms, by which nature rarely deceives the eye. He was loving, devoted, and faithful, capable of attachment and generosity of soul, and incapable of treachery or baseness; given to flattery, without doubt, but less through interest than enthusiasm; pleasing himself with illusions on the genius or the virtues of his protectors, to justify his adoration. A courtier by nature, and not through servility; so much the more qualified to please as he was more easily and more sincerely pleased himself.

His intellect, without rising to a genius for public affairs, possessed a precision which is the instinct of situations, and the high road of statesmen. He felt rather than invented a policy. A new man, desirous of serving an ancient cause, he judged France by the disposition of his own mind. To make the King acceptable to new France, and new France to the King, comprised the whole restoration, according to good sense and M. Decazes: counter-revolution if the King did not accept France, revolution if France did not accept the King. Two abysses traced the route, and there was no occasion for any great superiority to see it, or for any high initiative of idea to follow it. Prudence and moderation were sufficient: good will was all the genius necessary for such a work, and at such a moment.

It further required a personal, exclusive, and inflexible attachment to the King, who alone of all his palace under stood this policy. Finally, it required an aptitude in the management of men, to be able to repulse the fanatics of old France, without alienating them too much from the King, and to attract the capacities of new France, without too much giving up to them the restoration, which they did not love sufficiently that it might be confided entirely to them with safety for the King. M. Decazes was capable of these three government diplomacies. He did not pin his faith in any respect on the past. All his fortune might lie in the heart of the prince who could win his attachment. He had no fanaticism of revolution,

Capabilities of M. Decazes.

or of counter-revolution, calculated to embarrass his mind, and to prevent him from bending to the sinuosities of the great routine of governments. He had frankness enough to impart confidence to the men of both parties, finesse enough to divine their ambitions under their principles, intelligence enough to seduce them, and sufficient firmness of character to retain them after their seduction.

- No one perhaps was more capable by his qualities, as well as by his weaknesses, to form, from all these wrecks of parties with which France was covered, a personal party for the King, at once against his family, his enemies, and his friends. He spoke without much eloquence, but to the purpose; he comprehended better, and he acted constantly. Indefatigable in work, in political intrigue, in society, in pleasure, provided society and pleasure still offered means of government; he had connexions with all camps which might recruit that of the King. Too new, or too subordinate to excite the suspicion of the great aspirants of the court; too much mixed up with the events of the empire and of the revolution to be an object of suspicion to the Bonapartists, or to the constitutionalists converted to the restoration; he joined to all these gifts of nature, of birth, and of circumstances, a taste for literature, and a universality of conversation, which corresponded with the sedentary and literary tastes of the King. Finally, he was young, and this prince wished less for a minister than a scholar in his friend. Chance, therefore, better served the prince and the future favourite, than choice in this first meeting, which gave rise to their reciprocal attachment. Thus it may be seen that the heart exercises its influence and destiny over politics, even in the interior of palaces and in the privacy of courts.

XXXVI.

The King, after having encouraged a long conversation with the young man on the circumstances of the times, at length said to him, "I am quite pleased to have a prefect of police so intelligent and so safe; you will come in future and make me a personal report in my cabinet of all the important affairs of

Interview of M. Decazes with the King.

my capital." M. Decazes appeared modestly to decline this unusual favour, to induce the King to pronounce it more decidedly. He represented to his Majesty that he had received from M. de Vitrolles, in the name of the King and of the Count d'Artois, an order to transmit the police reports in writing to the court, which at first he addressed to Fouché, and that this communication, founded upon the suspicions which the character of Fouché excited at court, might be sufficient for the King. "No," hastily replied the prince, who distrusted the interference of his brother as much as that of Fouché:—"No, I repeat, no intermediate person hereafter between you and me. When you have any affair of consequence, you will acquaint me with it, and I will receive you."

Then still retaining him, after the business was terminated, he made inquiries with a friendly curiosity as to his name, his country, his family, and his preceding life. He appeared to be interested with everything that concerned the prefect, and employed all his fascination to inspire confidence. He displayed his wit, he exerted his memory, he insinuated his policy, and unveiled his heart, for he was in want of a friend. "Have I ever seen you before to-day?" he asked of M. Decazes. "I do not think I have, for your voice and countenance would have struck me." "Yes, Sire," replied the prefect of police, "I had the honour to present to you in 1814 the delegates of my department, and even to address your Majesty in their name." "It is astonishing," said the King; "but the fact is, I saw so many people at that time, that I could fix nothing in my memory. Come again, come often; I am pleased with you." The prince had longed for a substitute for M. d'Avray in his heart, and his policy was in conformity with his inclination; an intimate friend was indispensable to him.

XXXVII.

Fouché was alarmed, and seemed awkwardly enough to take a pleasure in alarming the King more and more every day, by exaggerated or sinister reports read in the council, which he delivered to the King, and then unfairly allowed

Fouché's manoeuvres to alarm the King.

to transpire in public, by pretended indiscretions, as if to make an appeal and a signal to public opinion out of doors, to support him by a pressure of popularity within; a knavish and cowardly manoeuvre, renewed from the letter of the minister Rowland to Louis XVI., in 1792.

"The moment is approaching," said he; "the national spirit is already taking this frightful direction. A fusion is taking place between the most opposite parties. La Vendée itself is joining its colours to those of the army. In this excess of calamity, what other part will remain for your Majesty to take but that of withdrawing. The magistrates will quit their functions of their own accord, and the armies of the allied sovereigns will then come into collision with individuals liberated from all social ties. A nation of thirty millions of inhabitants may disappear from the earth, but in this war of man to man, more than one tomb will enclose, by the side of each other, the oppressors and the oppressed!

"The calamities of France are complete: ruin, devastation, and destruction are taking place, as if for us there was neither peace nor compromise to be hoped for. The inhabitants are flying before the undisciplined soldiers; the forests are crowded with unhappy creatures, who flock thither in search of a last asylum. The harvests will perish in the fields. Despair will soon listen to no voice of authority; and this war, undertaken to secure the triumph of justice, will rival the barbarity of those deplorable and too celebrated invasions, of which history recalls the memory with horror."

XXXVIII.

While Fouché was thus agitating public opinion, and threatening at the same time the authority of the King, and the King himself with the revolution, M de Talleyrand was unpopular and tottering in the ministry, the Count d'Artois was murmuring, while the South, the provinces of the West, and even the foreigners, were calling for vengeance against the Bonapartists, the authors of these calamities. The people, trodden down by 700,000 soldiers, bewailed, without being

Result of the elections.

able to accuse any others than themselves, of the consequences of their weakness in yielding to the usurpation of Napoleon. The old army was dwindling away behind the Loire; the officers dismissed on half pay to their provinces, bore with them, on returning to their homes, imprecations against the conquerors, resentment for their fallen consequence, the bitterness of their present mediocrity in rural families, compared with their martial omnipotence under the Empire, which gave them promotion for their prey, and France and Europe for donations. They united themselves, by a coalition against nature—but made necessary by circumstances—with the constitutionalists, and the friends of the revolution and liberty, again become hostile to the Bourbons.

The foreign powers were imposing conditions which were unacceptable to the crown; the popular reactions of the royalists and the catholics in the south were shamefully avenging, in the blood of the Bonapartists and protestants, the insults and injuries they had themselves suffered, some months before, from these inimical factions or creeds,—an increasing clamour, which soon became fanatical, issuing from the mouths of the royalists, and from the pen of M. de Chateaubriand himself blamed the forbearance of the King, who refused an expiation of the attempt of the 20th March.

The elections which took place during this despair of the nation, and this angry retribution against the authors of the recent calamities of the country resulted in the discomfiture everywhere of the moderate men and the triumph of all the men of extreme opinions; as if in public calamities passion and fury constituted the desperate genius of nations. These elections threatened the King in the independence of his policy, and promised to make of him the King of a party instead of the pacifying monarch of France. He hoped to find in the Emperor Alexander, offended by M. de Talleyrand at the congress of Vienna, by his secret treaty with England and Austria, a supporter against the exigencies of the allied powers. He hoped to find in the Duke of Richelieu, the friend of this sovereign, a substitute for M. de Talleyrand, of more influence than this minister. Finally, he anticipated in M.

The King decides on dismissing Talleyrand and Fouché.

Decazes a successor to Fouché, who would take the ministry of police from this suspected man, and another Blacas equally agreeable to his heart but less unpopular.

He silently meditated the renewal of the ministry. "Until now," he repeated, in an under tone, to his most confidential friends, "M. de Talleyrand has had over me the advantage which events have given him, and which I have adroitly understood and suffered. His unskilfulness and indolence now give me the advantage. I keep my revenge for him and I am going to govern in my turn."

XXXIX.

But before he dismissed these two outlaws, Fouché and M. de Talleyrand, he wished to throw upon their hands the odium of the first reprisals, which the public cry of his court and his own policy imposed upon him. Public opinion, in its irritated state, had designated, right or wrong, some men as principal authors or abettors of Bonaparte's return, of the expulsion of the Bourbons, and of the disasters which afflicted at the same time the throne and the country. The spontaneous risings of Marseilles, of Nismes, and of several other cities of the South, —the assassinations which had forestalled the judgments, which had taken the victims by chance, and substituted sanguinary personal vengeance for legal justice,—the frenzy of the royalist journals, calling for vengeance as if for honour and safety—the repeated complaints of the little court of the Count d'Artois, rendered more imperative by the authority of the family, all seemed to enjoin the King not to wait for the assembling of the Chambers, to give satisfaction to the anger of some, and to the prudence of others, to arm himself for state reasons with an apparent rigour, and to remove some men by an arbitrary proscription—temporary but not sanguinary—that he might not have to give them up at a later period to the sword of justice, or the passions of the royalist party.

"Are there no bounds to clemency?" wrote the publicists in France and elsewhere, who were mad for an expiation. "Do crimes not exist which the interest of France and of

Lists of proscriptions are drawn up by Fouché.

Europe cannot suffer to go unpunished? Are loyalty and fidelity alone to suffer the consequences of the disasters provoked by traitors? Are firmness and severity crimes? The judge condemns himself in acquitting the guilty. How much blood and treasure has not a magnanimity ill-repaid already cost to Europe?

A twofold proscription was resolved on in the council; one directed against the men most notoriously culpable, who were to be arrested and brought before councils of war; the other levelled at the men who were reputed dangerous, and which would condemn them to exile. Fouché was charged, in his quality of minister of police, to draw up these lists of proscription, and to submit them to the council and to the King; who would add to, or erase from them, such names as might be selected by the anger or the favour of the court. He had now a natural and worthy opportunity of retiring, and of at least retrieving his own name by refusing to proscribe those whom he had instigated or followed in the complicity of the hundred days, and to whom he had so often promised amnesty. He did not do so. Ambition, which had made him accept as glory the appearance of treason, made him accept as necessity the part of proscriber of his accomplices. He felt already that there was no possible retreat behind him, and no asylum but in power. His past actions surrounded him everywhere, and condemned him to refuse nothing more to the royalists: a proscriber for them, or proscribed by them. He therefore acquiesced.

XL

The following day, Fouché brought to the council a list of one hundred and ten names, one part chosen by the public clamour, the other by chance, and from amongst men whose insignificance, or the obscurity of whose crimes, protected them from the honour of proscription. In this first choice, however, he had not evinced any personal weakness; all his accomplices of the hundred days, — Bonapartists, Orleanists, ministers, colleagues, representatives of his party, equals or subordinates

Fouché's warning and assistance to the proscribed

generals, marshals, agents of his police, and executors of his orders,—were comprised in it; Lanjuinais, Diesbach, Flaugergues, Carnot, and Caulincourt, closed the list. He had sacrificed himself liberally; there only wanted his own name.

The King and his ministers had only to soften down the rigours of Fouché, and to strike out names which innocence, indulgence, or favour recommended to pardon. Louis XVIII. erased with his own hand that of Benjamin Constant, and the Emperor Alexander that of Caulaincourt. The list thus limited to the names most notoriously compromised, was at first reduced to eighty, and afterwards to thirty-seven. During this ballotting, which continued for several days, Fouché, authorised by the King and by his own repugnance, to seize those whom he had marked out, sent them warning, saw personally a great number of them, and distributed to, or offered them disguises, passports, the means of escaping, and even the sums necessary for their residence abroad. Five or six hundred thousand francs, from the treasury of the police, were distributed by him to those whom he rather wished to save than proscribe. The most obstinate, or the most foolhardy, alone fell subsequently into the hands of the executors of these orders.

The word proscription had been written for state reasons alone by the King and the minister. The real object of the council was the removal of the proscribed persons, to give satisfaction not to vengeance, but to public clamour. The King did not wish for victims, Europe did not ask for blood

XLI.

The act of proscription ran as follows:—

“Desirous, by the punishment of an attempt without example, but graduating the penalty, and limiting the number of the guilty—of conciliating the interest of our subjects, the dignity of our crown, and the tranquillity of Europe, with what we owe to justice and to the full security of all other citizens,

The act of proscription.

without distinction, we have declared, and do declare, have ordered, and do order as follows :

"Art. I. The generals and officers who have betrayed the King before the 23rd of March, or who have attacked France and the government by force of arms, and those who by violence have possessed themselves of power, shall be seized and brought before the competent courts-martial in their respective divisions: viz. Ney, Labédoyère, Lallemand senior, Lallemand junior, Drouet d'Erlon, Lefebvre, Desnouettes, Ameil, Brayer, Gilly, Mouton-Duvernet, Grouchy, Clausel, Laborde, Debelle, Bertrand, Drouot, Cambronne, Lavalette, and Rovigo.

"Art. II. The individuals whose names here follow: viz. Soult, Alix, Excelmans, Bassano, Marbot, Felix Lepelletier, Boulay de la Meurthe, Méhée, Freissinet, Thibeaudeau, Carnot, Vandamme, General Lamarque, Lobau, Harel, Piré, Barrère, Arnault, Pommereul, Regnault de St. Jean d'Angely, Arrighi de Padoue, Dejean jun., Garrau, Réal, Bouvier, Dumolard, Merlin (de Douai), Durback, Dirat, Defermon, Bory de St-Vincent, Félix Desportes, Garnier (de Saintes), Hullin, Mellinet, Cluys, Courtin, Forbin-Janson jun., Leborgne d'Ideville,—shall quit Paris in three days, and shall retire to the interior of France, to the places which will be indicated by our minister of general police, and where they shall remain under his superintendence, until the Chambers shall declare which of them are to quit the kingdom, or to be sent for trial before the tribunals.

"Art. III. Those individuals who shall be condemned to quit the kingdom shall have the power of selling their estates and property, within the term of one year; to dispose of and transport the produce out of France, and to receive during this period the revenue thereof in foreign countries, on condition, however, of furnishing the proof of their obedience to the present ordinance.

"Art. IV. The lists of all the individuals to whom Articles I and II may be applicable, are and shall remain closed by the names designated in these articles, and can never be extended to others for any cause or pretext whatsoever, other-

 Causes of the proscription.

wise than in the forms and according to the constitutional laws; from which deviation is only made for this special case.

(Signed) LOUIS.

"By the King.

The Minister Secretary of State for the police department

(Signed) DUKE OF OTRANTO."

XLII.

Thus was begun in France, in spite of the King, and in spite of the minister, but under the presentiment of the Chamber which was about to assemble full of vengeance, the era of proscription of 1815; fatal concessions, not of the heart but of the weakness of the monarch, who, with the spirit and the will of clemency, gave himself the appearance of rigour. Louis XVIII., did not sufficiently feel, under the circumstances, his power against the foreign princes, against his own party, and against his brother, as he had not sufficiently felt it at Arnouville when prostituting the royal authority to Fouché. He was the man essential to Europe, to France, and to the royalists themselves. He ought to have known this; and, to demonstrate it to all, he had merely to refuse concessions which lowered him as a man, without strengthening him as a King.

In conceding the nomination of Fouché, that he might enter Paris in favour with the revolution, he had lessened his personal dignity in the eyes of the royalists; in conceding this beginning of a proscription, against his will, to his party and to the allied powers at the commencement of his reign, he lessened his popularity as a royal peace-maker and mediator, in the eyes of the revolution. His character yielded to both sides in the course of a few weeks. He had furnished both parties with the secret of his weakness. The royalists and the liberals were going to draw him on successively farther than he wished to go. He had not marked with sufficient

Their impolicy.

resolution the fixed points at which it became him to maintain his character and his reign, the dignity of his race, the impartiality of his mind, the sovereign umpirage of his heart between the parties. A restoration can never be anything but an amnesty. Pardon is not its virtue only, it is its law.

BOOK THIRTY-FIRST.

Murat—His flight from Naples—Arrival at the Isle of Ischia—His aide-de-camp, the Duke of Rocca Romana—His departure for France—He lands at Cannes—Offers his services to the Emperor—Refusal of Napoleon—Terror in the South—Murat quits the neighbourhood of Toulon and conceals himself—Asks an asylum from Louis XVIII.—It is granted to him in Austria—Attempts at flight—He fails—Adventures—His retreat—Dangers—He embarks for Corsica—Perils of the passage—Incidents—He is picked up at sea—His arrival in Corsica—He retires to the mountains—Political situation of Corsica—Murat is summoned to surrender by the governor of the island—His refusal—The governor sends a body of soldiers to arrest him—Their failure—Projects of Murat—He departs on an expedition to Naples—His march towards Ajaccio—Entry into the City—Arrival of Macirone—He sends him the passport for Austria—Murat's letter—His departure for Naples—Passage—Desertion of one of his vessels—Incidents—He disembarks at the port of Pizzo—Endeavours to raise the population—His arrest—Last moments—Condemnation—Death—Review of his life.

I.

But before we enter upon a narrative of those proscriptions, of those assassinations, of those trials, and those executions, which were to strike with dismay the second return of the King—sinister pages which the friends of the restoration would wish to tear from its history—let us first return to one of its most illustrious outlaws, whom the events of the hundred days led on to his ruin; and whose flight, last attempt, and death, commenced this period of vicissitudes, of vengeance, and of blood. We speak of Murat, whose life, like that of Napoleon, was not terminated by his first fall from the throne, and by the surrender of his kingdom to the Bourbons of Naples. It seemed to be the destiny of this satellite of Napoleon to rise with him, to fall with him

Murat's flight from Naples.

to rise again with him, and to enact after him the heroic parody of a second reign, but also to fall again like him, no longer into banishment but the tomb.

II.

We left him, in the preceding volume of this history, vanquished, cast down, tearing himself in the night from the embraces of his wife, the sister of Napoleon, and of his children, who were going to fly on board an English vessel; himself stealing from his palace, with two faithful companions in misfortune, in borrowed clothes, looking for a fisherman's boat on the shore of his own kingdom, already invaded; embarking, under favour of night, at Cape Miseno, and rowing towards the little Isle of Ischia, where his authority still nominally existed, but where his flag was already lowered.

On arriving there, he cut off his long hair, by which he was distinguished amongst other men of his camp and his kingdom. He did not make known there who he was, apprehensive that the islanders might deliver him up to the Austrians who had already entered Naples, or to the Bourbons who were approaching, that they might, by giving up his head to his enemies, earn the reward of treason. Some of his officers, commanding the forts of the island, were alone acquainted with his residence there. He hoped chance would give him an opportunity of flying to France.

The next morning, when walking with his two companions in misfortune on the solitary shore of the island, between the town of Ischia and the garden walls of one of his old pleasure palaces, he saw a felucca, which was tacking undecidedly between the harbour and the beach on which he was walking; and which seemed by its manœuvres to have no other object than to be observed, and to wait for passengers at an appointed rendezvous. Murat surmised that this vessel, freighted by some unknown friends, might perhaps be an unexpected aid sent to him by fortune. He made signals therefore, which were instantly replied to by the officers on board. The vessel approached the beach, and sent her boat on shore. Murat

Murat departs from Ischia for France.

immediately jumped into it with his two friends, and in a few moments found himself on the deck of the felucca, and in the arms of his aide-de-camp, the Duke of Rocca-Romana.

This officer who was called the Bayard of the Neapolitan army, had, beneath the aspect and outward form of a paladin, that antique and determined stamp of friendship in his character, which is now but rarely found in Italy, enervated by long servitude, but which, in those hearts where it is to be found, noble or plebeian, equals all that antiquity or chivalry can boast of an heroic and superhuman cast. Such was Rocca-Romana, worthy by his rank of the court of the Bourbons, worthy by his bravery of fighting by the side of Murat, and worthy by his fidelity to the fallen fortunes of his old general, of the esteem of both parties. His image, as we thus depict it, is still in our eyes and our memory.

III

The Duke of Rocca-Romana, on learning from his military and court friends, that Murat had taken the direction of Cape Miseno, conjectured that the King had taken refuge at Ischia. He hastened, therefore, in concert with the Duchess of Conigliano, Murat's niece, to embark on board a Calabrian felucca, belonging to a farmer on his estate, which was at the moment in the port of Naples; and he made sail towards the island, to seek for his master as chance might direct, to take him on board, and save him. Murat, Rocca-Romana, the Neapolitan Colonel Bonafoux, the Marquis Giuliano, and some other servants of the King, made sail for Toulon. The King hoped that Napoleon, who was then still at Paris, would grant him his pardon, and permit him to return to Paris, to fight as a chief, or as a volunteer in his cavalry, when he might redeem his ambitious infidelity with his blood. In this vague hope, but without daring to anticipate in Paris the pardon which he was preparing to solicit, he disembarked on the same coast where Napoleon himself had landed, at Cannes, the 28th May, as if he had wished to follow exactly the footsteps of his brother-in-law. He took refuge in a sort of half-mystery, while waiting,

He offers his services to the Emperor, and is refused.

in a country villa, belonging to Admiral Lallemand, called Plaisance, in the vicinity of Toulon.

He wrote from thence to Fouché, minister of police, who had been his guest a long time at Naples, and the confidant of all his family and political quarrels with the Emperor. He could not have made choice of a more powerful negociator. Fouché lent himself with his natural complaisance to this part of mediator and conciliator between the two brothers-in-law. He loved Murat, and thought him necessary to the success of the army. But at the first word he uttered on the subject to the Emperor, the latter became gloomy, and cast a glance at Fouché, which seemed to imply that the residence of Murat at Toulon, of which he wished to appear ignorant, was a sufficiently great indulgence. "What treaty of peace, of which I am ignorant," said he to Fouché, "has been concluded between the King of Naples and France?" Fouché did not venture to persist against a resentment, which might soon change to a threat. He acquainted Murat with the unfavourable dispositions of his brother-in-law, and counselled him to wait in obscurity until victory should recall Napoleon's generosity, or till reverses should restore friendship to his heart. Murat obeyed, trembling with impatience, his heart corroding with grief and remorse, in the solitude and idleness of his retreat.

IV

He was only aroused from this lethargy by the rumour of the catastrophe of Waterloo, the abdication and flight of the Emperor, and of the return of the Bourbons—his enemies at Paris, through the recollection, very unjust with respect to him, of the execution of the Duke d'Enghien; and his enemies at Naples, from a community of interest and of blood. The royalist risings at Marseilles—the murder of General Ramel at Toulouse—of General Lagarde at Nismes—of Marshal Brune, at Avignon—the reign of terror, which only changed its colours in the south, and which was raging even in Toulon, against all who adhered either by blood, by functions, or by opinions to Bonaparte—compelled him to quit the house of Admiral Lalle-

Murat asks an asylum from Louis XVIII.

mand, where the police of the Marquis de Rivière, the King's commissioner in the south, knew that he resided.

He took shelter in a retreat unknown to all, except to some naval officers, devoted to his misfortunes, and faithful to his secret. From thence he turned his thoughts towards the generosity of the Bourbons, who had returned to Paris, to ask them for safety and an asylum in France. He wrote a dignified and touching letter to the King, and another to Fouché, the only one who remained in power after the ruin of the imperialists. This letter from the pen of Murat was dated : " From the depths of my gloomy retreat, the 22nd of August 1815."

The unfortunate King of Naples was, in fact, deprived of the light of day in his retreat ; and it was only during the night that he could breathe the fresh air, and get a glimpse of the heavens. In his letter to Fouché he informed him that not daring to travel through the south, which was stained with the blood of Brune, to go and throw himself at the feet of the King, he was going to embark for Havre on board a trading vessel, freighted by his friends in Toulon, and that from Havre he could go to Paris with less danger to his life. At the same time he commissioned one of his aides-de-camps, Colonel Macirone, the confidant and secret agent of Fouché in Paris, to negotiate with the allied powers for a safe conduct for him, assigning him an asylum and a place of residence in one of the continental states.

During this correspondence, which was slow and impeded by the state of ignorance in which Murat wished to keep Fouché, and even Macirone, of the place of his retreat, events hurried on rapidly, and his retreat being in danger of discovery by the spies of the Terror at Toulon, he was compelled to form and reject other resolutions.

Meanwhile Fouché, M de Talleyrand, the Duke of Wellington and Prince Metternich, yielding without difficulty to the solicitations of Murat, and to the wishes expressed by his aide-de-camp Macirone, and the Marquis Giuliano, another of

His retreats and their dangers.

the companions of his flight, who had been sent by Murat to Paris, furnished Macirone with letters and passports from M. de Metternich, the Austrian plenipotentiary at Paris, authorising the ex-king of Naples to rejoin his wife and children at Trieste, and to reside in safety in the states of the Emperor of Austria.

But the destiny and intentions of Murat had been already changed by one of those fatal chances which frustrate the best laid plans, and which threw the outlaws back into a state of anxiety worse than before their attempts at evasion.

Murat ought to have been able to reckon on the indulgence and the private feelings of the Marquis de Rivière, the governor of Toulon. At the period when this gentleman, then an outlaw himself, had returned clandestinely to France, to hatch plots there against Napoleon, had been tried and condemned to death as an accomplice of the conspiracies of Polignac, of Pichegru, and of Moreau, he had been indebted for his pardon and his life, to the generous intercessions of Murat with the First Consul. This was for M. de Rivière a rare and sacred occasion of returning generosity for generosity, safety for safety, to a fugitive cast in turn on his mercy by the vicissitudes of fate. The Marquis de Rivière, who was experienced in proscriptions, was worthy, it is said, by his heart, to take upon himself the protection of his old intercessor and the anger of the royalists. But whether his understanding was not equal to his feelings, whether the prudence of Murat did not give him the means of communicating to him in his retreat the good intentions of the governor of the south, or that the zeal and researches of the secondary or volunteer agents of the royalist police overstepped the orders of M. de Rivière, the alarm caused to Murat and his friends by the snares that were laid for them, obliged them frequently to change their place of concealment. Weary of this continual terror, which besieged his retreats, and which left him no hope of safety in any part of France, Murat renounced the idea of going to Havre and to Paris, and resolved to repair to Corsica, an island full of the relations, the partisans, and the dependants of the Bonaparte family, still badly disposed towards the new government of the Bourbons, unfurnished with French troops, left in a sort of

Preparations for departure for Corsica.

expectation and neutrality between events, and where the numerous creeks, the impracticable roads, the forests, the mountains, the sacred hospitality of the inhabitants presented a thousand means of flight, of inaccessible retreats, or of temporary security for an outlaw. By the care of the Marquis Giuliano, of Macirone, of the Count of Mosbourg, and of a lady in Paris, whom he had loved before he was a King, and who preserved for him that remembrance of love which is the tenderest and most courageous of friendships, he had received from Paris, clothes, linen, jewels, arms, and a sum of 200,000 francs, to assist him in his plans of flight. He commissioned the Duke of Rocca-Romana, Colonel Bonafoux, and the Marquis Guiliano, his aides-de-camp, less disturbed and less suspected at Toulon from being strangers to the civil discords of the country, to freight a light vessel for him, to make the passage from the French coast to the island of Corsica. These faithful friends, assisted by the officers of the French navy of whom we have already spoken, succeeded without much difficulty, in a few days, to arrange their preparations with the greatest secrecy. The treasure, the equipments, the arms, the servants, and even the clothing of the King were embarked on board the hired vessel, which now only awaited Murat himself.

VI.

The vigilance of the police at the gates of Toulon, or in the port of the city, and the sanguinary menaces of which he was the object as a presumed accomplice of the 20th March, did not permit him to embark in the harbour at the same time as his officers and his servants, for the hand of a hired assassin or a commotion of the people might seize and strike him at his last step on the shore of his country. It was therefore agreed that the vessel should put to sea without him, that it should stand off and on in the roads, at a certain distance from Toulon, and that, approaching the land towards a point agreed on, where the King would be during the night, the captain should send a boat ashore, and embark the fugitive monarch under cover of the darkness and the solitude.

Murat misses the vessel.

On the day fixed for their departure, the 2nd of August, all was accomplished which concerned the vessel that had been engaged. The Duke of Rocca-Romana, Colonel Bonafoux, two domestics, and the King's equipage, sailed out of the harbour without exciting suspicion, and the vessel which bore them, cruised slowly till the close of day in the roads. The boat was then lowered, approached the shore towards the point agreed on, and the sailors who rowed it searched a long time for Murat and the Marquis Guiliano, amongst the rocks and olive trees that skirted the shore.

But they sought for and awaited him in vain. A body of soldiers and police agents prowling through the country around the King's retreat, had prevented him from leaving it at the hour of rendezvous which he had assigned to his friends. The boat therefore returned to the vessel. The friends and servants of Murat, in a state of consternation, deliberated amongst themselves in a mortal fright, what was best to be done to parry this fatal mischance; some thinking that their unfortunate master had mistaken the place of rendezvous, and was waiting for them in some creek nearer to, or farther from Toulon; others that he had mistaken the hour of the day, and that he would make his appearance on the shore after the departure of the vessel.

The latter proposed landing and passing the night in attempting to discover him, calling upon him from rock to rock; the former proposed cruising within reach of the shore, and at the risk of being seized by the coast-guard, until the King should make his appearance, and the boat might be sent again for him to the shore. They decided on this last measure, the most prudent of all, and tacked about opposite the coast. But these suspicious manoeuvres having attracted the attention of the same royalist patrol which had scoured the country around the King's retreat, these men hailed the vessel, went on board sword in hand, uttering sanguinary imprecations against the Bonapartists and against the King of Naples, declaring that if they had found him on board they would have avenged his crimes without trial, and cast his body into the sea; they ordered the captain, under threat of seizing his vessel,

Suspicious of the royalist patrol.

to quit the coast immediately and proceed to sea, to avoid the suspicion of endeavouring to save some of the outlaws. The Duke of Rocca-Romana, and Colonel Bonafoux, with the servants and equipments of the King, concealed during this visit in the bottom of the hold, behind bales of merchandise destined apparently for Corsica, had fortunately escaped the notice of the assassins.

VII.

The captain of the vessel, compelled to obey under pain of exciting suspicions, and calling out patrols inevitably fatal to the King, pretended to put to sea after their departure, but slackening sail again to give Murat time and opportunity still to rejoin them, he kept on under easy sail within reach of the coast during the night. Rocca-Romana, in despair would have died rather than thus escape alone, instead of the friend, whom he had come to save; but the armed vessels that guarded the coast, and which observed the ship, prevented it from making the shore again, or even from approaching it too near.

During these events at sea, the gangs who were watching the approaches to Murat's retreat having retired, the King came out about midnight, and reached, without being perceived, the point of the coast where the vessel was to have waited and taken him on board. He did not doubt the punctuality of his companions in arms being there, nor their patience in waiting for him. He enjoyed already in imagination, that feeling of anticipated safety which at length he was going to enjoy in Corsica, after the long oppression of sorrow and terror under which he had existed for the last three months.

Vain illusion of the outlaw, by turns the sport of fortune in hopes and fears! The shore was deserted, and the sea vacant. The King thought he had come too late or too early. He still continued to hope that the vessel would appear with every wave that rustled at his feet. More disturbed, however, as the night wore away, and new stars were rising or setting behind the mountains of the coast, he ascended from rock to rock, to obtain, from a greater elevation, a more extended

The vessel puts to sea without Murat.

view of the sea. He thought he saw a sail in the white crest of every wave, and still clung to hope with the obstinacy of a man who must cease to live if deprived of that consolation.

At length the first glimpses of the morning twilight spread a broader gleam than that of the moon upon the waves. He saw and recognised his vessel by the description which had been given to him, and by the signals which had been agreed upon between himself and his friends at Toulon. But he saw her only to feel at the same time the absolute impossibility of reaching her. There was no boat on the shore that he could avail himself of, and the vessel, watched by the coast-guard boats, was under full sail for the open sea.

His last hopes and his last friends were vanishing together with this sail. He fell for a moment thunderstruck upon a rock, calling for death, or for his friends

VIII.

But he was one of those men who do not long bend under the weight of calamities, even the most desperate. Fortified by the perils encountered in his youth, by playing with destiny, and by the dangers, braved or avoided, of the field of battle, against all extremities of fortune, he, like all men of courage, did not submit to them until he had exhausted all the resources of his presence of mind, and all the vigour of his character in endeavours to surmount them. Conquerable only by death, the energy and flexibility of his soul subdued, even in the most sinister assaults of fate, all outward symptoms of weakness, and his countenance still displayed the smile and the serenity of his courage.

He arose after waiting some moments in vain for the return of his vessel, now more and more impossible, which was disappearing under the waves of the horizon, and he plunged amidst the fields and olive groves which line the coast, not knowing whither to direct his steps, but still unable to remain in a state of inaction.

Daylight would now soon discover him to those who had been in search of him during the night. The conviction that

Murat wanders about the coast for three days and four nights.

his asylum of the preceding evening was suspected and surrounded, did not permit him to return to it, unless at the risk of falling into the hands of his executioners. Under every roof which he saw in the country he was apprehensive of meeting with an informer or an enemy. He went on as chance directed, avoiding the vicinity of the forts and villages, receding from the sea coast, following no other paths than those which his instinct pointed out to him as the most hidden and deserted, frequently tempted to knock at the doors of some isolated houses, but as often withheld by the dread of finding some traitor within.

He wandered thus for three days and four nights, without any other nourishment than some grains of Indian corn which he ground between his teeth to support nature, and having no other covering from the cold night air while he slept, than the leaves of the olive trees. He did not, however, retire too far from the borders of the sea; and approached the shore every evening, in the vague hope that his friends, when once freed from the observation of the vessels of war, would land in the neighbourhood of the spot they had fixed upon, and that they would succeed in discovering him, and take him on board.

IX

But none of these hopes were realised. About noon on the fourth day, compelled by hunger and the weakness of his limbs, he decided on knocking, at all risks, at the door of the first cottage which should present itself, and to seek for hospitality or death from the generosity or treachery of its inhabitants. He flattered himself even that he would not be recognised, and that he might sound the feelings and opinions of his hosts, before he should reveal himself, or steal away again from their threshold.

His fortune conducted him towards a poor and rustic cottage isolated from the other houses scattered about these hills, and belonging to an old military man retired from the service, who cultivated there the little inheritance of his fathers. An aged female servant, who kept house for the owner, was the sole

He takes shelter in a cottage.

companion of her master, who was absent at the moment of Murat's arrival. The King gave a timid knock, and the door was opened by the old woman, who, seeing a man of mild and noble countenance, whose dress was half civil and half military, but decent and even rich, thought he was some friend or companion in arms of her master, and invited him with confidence to enter. The King told her that he was an officer of the garrison of Toulon, a stranger in the country; that having gone astray in the course of a long walk across the fields, he felt himself pressed by fatigue and hunger, and that he thought the inhabitants of this house would be hospitable enough to permit him to take some rest and nourishment in it. The grace and nobleness of the King's countenance; the politeness of his manners, and the honest frankness of his accent convinced and touched the worthy housekeeper.

She invited the King to sit down on the bench at the kitchen-table, and occupied herself in lighting the fire, and looking for some eggs to prepare him a dinner. While thus employed in her household affairs, she conversed with the stranger with that domestic familiarity of the south, which places less distance, than in the interior of France, between servants and their master. She begged him to pardon the homely fare she had to offer him, and told him that if her master had expected him he would certainly have received him at a better provided table. As she pronounced the word master the King started; but concealing his anxiety under a feigned indifference, he asked her carelessly who her master was, and if he was to be long absent from home. She replied that he had only just gone out to look at his olive trees, and that he would soon return. The King was about to renew his inquiries, when the master himself returned from his walk, and seeing a stranger of noble appearance in his house, already seated and eating at his table, he cordially greeted him, and sitting down opposite to him, said he was hungry himself, and ordered his housekeeper to prepare him another dish of eggs, and to bring him another bottle of wine. The King, in fact, half famished by his long fast in the woods, had already devoured the food which had been placed before him, before the arrival of the master of the house.

The King is discovered by his host.

X.

The guest and his host were scarcely seated opposite each other at the same table, when the latter, looking more closely and with a better light at the person who was before him, recognised the King of Naples, by his perfect resemblance to his effigy on the coin of the Grand Duchy of Berg and of the kingdom of the two Sicilies. With a start of surprise and confusion, he arose from his seat, and evincing in his looks, his gesture, and his attitude, all the respect and emotion he felt in the presence of such fallen greatness, begged pardon of him for the involuntary familiarity he had assumed towards so august and so unexpected a guest. He hastened to assure him of his discretion, and vowed he would risk his life a thousand times rather than betray him; his house, his fortune, and his person, he said, were without any reserve at his service.

At this sudden exclamation of her master, and the warm demonstrations of respect and devotion he evinced towards the stranger, the old housekeeper, who was occupied with her cookery, turned round with astonishment, found that the guest she had entertained was a king, and in the midst of her emotion letting fall amongst the ashes the dish she was preparing for her master, threw herself all trembling at the feet of Murat, and lost all presence of mind in her excuses and deep emotion in so august a presence.

XI

The King returned his thanks to providence which had directed him better than if he had made a deliberate choice of an asylum. He passed some tranquil days, happy and unknown, beneath this hospitable roof. But the master of the house being one of those military men, at that time suspected of imperialist sympathies and predilections, one upon whom the Toulon police had their eyes especially fixed, Murat did not think it prudent to prolong his residence there beyond the time necessary to find another retreat more certain for himself. By the assiduity of

He takes refuge in the vicinity of Toulon.

his host and the naval officers his friends, whom he had acquainted with his adventure, he took refuge in another house in the vicinity of Toulon, belonging to a captain of a vessel, and just then uninhabited.

One woman alone, faithful, vigilant, and sure, was entrusted with the secret, and entrusted to the service of the King, in this house which was thought to be abandoned. The two naval officers of Toulon, the only confidants of his secret, watched over his safety at a distance, and brought him from time to time, during the night, such articles as he stood in need of, and hopes of better fortune.

But a rumour was spread about, amongst the executioners of popular vengeance in the south, of the presence of the King of Naples concealed in the neighbourhood of Toulon, and of imaginary treasures and jewels, the envied spoils of those who should discover him, which redoubled the ardour of the investigators around him. The woman who served him had not one hour of safety, she watched all night while the King slept, to listen to the footsteps and the noises of the nocturnal patrols in the country, and to warn the King to fly if armed visitors should approach the house.

XII.

In spite of these precautions and this discretion of the friends of Murat, silence and mystery themselves seemed to reveal the outlaw. During the night of the 13th August, a band of sixty royalist volunteers, guided and commanded by one of the chiefs most eagerly bent on discovering the King, surrounded the country house where he had taken shelter. From the windows of the house, which was situated on an eminence, might be perceived during the day everything that approached, and he would then have time to conceal himself from all research; but under favour of the shades of night, and of the silence enjoined to the troops, the proscribers might surround and surprise their victim without giving him either a hint of their approach, or the time to conceal himself. But a lantern carried in a hollow road by one of the guides of the armed party to light

His retreat is surrounded and invaded by royalist troops.

them in their march, having revealed to Murat's guardian, who was watching near a window, the approach of a distant patrol ascending the road towards the house, she suddenly awoke the King who slept in his clothes with his arms by his side, and warned him of the coming danger.

He sprang from his bed, threw his cloak about him, seized his poniard and his pistols, and going out without noise by a back door, he plunged amongst the tall vines about sixty paces from the house, and covered himself with some faggots of dry vine-branches, left by the vine-growers in their fields. The old woman carefully closed the door of the house after the King, removed every trace which might reveal the presence of a stranger in any of the rooms, and pretending to awake and to dress herself slowly at the knocking of the visitors at the door, she did not open it to them until she had given the King the time necessary to fly and conceal himself.

While the volunteers were inspecting, with all the bitterness of disappointed rage, the apartments, the cellars, the garrets, and the most secret places of the house, others prowled about the court yards, in the garden, and even amongst the vineyards near the house. They passed several times, with their lanterns in hand and their sabres drawn, within a few paces of the bundles of vine-branches which concealed the fugitive, and the King heard them break out in curses against him, and in hopes of discovering him, that they might immolate him to their fury, and divide his spoils amongst them. During these observations of his persecutors who left only a few steps between himself and death, Murat kept his hand on his poignard and his pistols; decided, as he has since related, to kill the first that he could strike, and to reserve his last pistol for himself, that he might give up nothing but a dead body to the ferocity of his executioners.

This mysterious search thus baffled in the house he inhabited, made it more sure to him, and he sought no more to change his place of residence. But a price was set upon his head at Marseilles. A thousand Louis d'or were promised to any one who should deliver him up dead or alive to the inquisitors of the Bourbon party. As the soil of France must,

He embarked on board a fishing-boat for Corsica.

therefore, sooner or later open beneath his footsteps, he resumed his idea of taking refuge in Corsica.

XIII.

The three young naval officers, who had never ceased to devote themselves secretly to his escape, and who were ready to share his dangers, Messrs. Donnadieu, Blancard, and Langlade prepared for him a new plan of escape. A fishing boat, without deck or cabin, in which these young men embarked themselves, awaited the King during a dark night, and a rough sea, on another point of the coast. This time he succeeded in getting aboard, favoured by the fancied security of the coast guard, who thought the shore sufficiently guarded, in such a night by the tempest; and he gave himself up to the winds and waves, less cruel perhaps, and less relentless than political parties.

The boat which was only large enough to hold four persons, managed by intrepid hands, quitted the roadstead and was sailing at day-break on the open sea, in the direction of the island of Corsica. But the storm which drove more mighty waves against the frail bark in the open sea, than in the sheltered roadstead of Toulon, the wind which had torn the sail and broken the yard, the water which the boat shipped at every squall, threatened to open for the King and his friends a tomb amidst every wave. Perceiving a decked vessel going before the wind towards the French coast, they endeavoured to reach it, to beg the crew to take them on board and carry them to Corsica, offering the captain as a reward for this service, a part of the money which the King had about him. But the captain and crew, deaf to their entreaties, kept on their way without pity, at the risk of swamping the boat under their bows, and left Murat to struggle with the raging elements. The night was falling, the wind was howling, and the boat took in water and trembled at every shock of the sea, when another sail showed itself over the waves, by the glimmering twilight, sailing towards Corsica, in the same direction as Murat, and on the point of passing him.

This was the mail-boat from Toulon to Corsica, commanded

He is picked up at sea, and proceeds to Corsica.

by Captain Michaello Bonelli, of Bastia, which was conveying despatches and passengers to the island. At the signals of distress, the gestures and cries of Murat and his companions, the generous captain, though himself threatened by the tempest, did not hesitate to back his sails, and wait for the boat. He pretended to be ignorant who the persons were in such imminent peril that he received on board; but the captain of the frigate Olessa, who had embarked in the mail boat at Toulon, had been confidentially informed before he left of the King's departure. He took it for granted that the winds and the waves would not intimidate this gallant prince, and that he should fall in with him at sea, struggling with the tempest; he had therefore, secretly hinted to the commandant of the mail-boat, to scan the horizon, and to pick up the unfortunate King of Naples. Murat was accordingly received on the deck of the vessel more like a King than a shipwrecked wanderer.

He had scarcely got on board, when his boat, dismasted and shattered by the waves, foundered in sight of the passengers.

XIV.

Besides the captain of the navy who was devoted to him, Murat found on board the mail-boat, some partisans of his cause, and some men who were flying, if not from proscription, at least from disgrace. Amongst these were senators, Corsican generals of high rank, of the family, of the court, or high in the favour of Napoleon; the Bacciocchis, the Casabiancas, the Rossis, the Galvanis. They received Murat with all the marks of respectful consideration and deference compatible with the reserve called for by the circumstances of the times. It was agreed amongst all on board, that on their arrival in port, they should affect to be ignorant of the name and title of the King. He had taken the name of Campo Meli, one of the fiefs of his former kingdom.

XV.

The King, who landed under this name at Bastia, was soon recognised, and silently received with that mute popularity

He takes up his residence at Viscovato

which attached to his person, to his exploits, and to his misfortunes, which, in the ignorance of the islanders, were identified with the reverses of Napoleon. Fearing, however, that the agents and partisans of the Bourbons in the city, the centre of the government, might take umbrage at his residing there, and execute some order of severity against him, either received from Paris, or inspired by their own zeal, he passed only one night in the city, and the day after his arrival he went with some friends to Viscovato, a village situated in the centre of some lofty mountains, at twelve leagues distance from Bastia.

The principle family of Viscovato was that of Colonna, of ancient race and consideration in these mountains, where the people, as in the East, recognise natural and hereditary masters, in the chiefs of the old tribes of the country. Murat had been prompted to throw himself into Viscovato, by his recollections of the name of this family of Colonna, into which one of his most confidential generals, Franceschetti, had married. He thought that the gratitude and affection which this general, who had been loaded with his favours at Naples, had communicated to his relations, would be a pledge of hospitality and fidelity. He was not deceived. The ties of nature and of the heart, are more sacred in Corsica than those of politics or opinion, as amongst all primitive people, where man is above the subject or the citizen. The mayor of Viscovato, Colonna Cecaldi, father-in-law of General Franceschetti, was the chief of this family. He was a royalist, an enemy to Bonaparte, and devoted to the Bourbons; but, above all, devoted to family feeling, to the duties of hospitality towards those who invoke it, and to the ancient manners of his country.

XVI.

Murat on arriving, like a chieftain of the mountain bands of Scotland, or of Lebanon, in the square of Viscovato, alighted from his horse before the threshold of a house which had the most imposing appearance of any in the village; this was the residence of Colonna Cecaldi. The master of the house, and the chief of the country, Colonna, came out at the noise of the

Dispositions of the Corsicans.

horses of the King's suite. Murat mentioned his name, acquainted him with the motives of his landing on the island, and asked him for an asylum and protection amongst his people, with the sole intention of awaiting in safety amidst these mountains what the King of France and the allied sovereigns should decide respecting him. The venerable chief of the Colonnas replied to the King by an assurance of the most inviolable hospitality. He told him that there did not exist, to his knowledge, any order of the King of France, or any reason of conscience or honour, for a faithful partisan of the Bourbons, which could authorise any person in Corsica to treat the deposed King of Naples as a fugitive and an enemy.

The King lived for some days in security and peace in the house of Colonna Cecaldi, where it was not long before he was rejoined by the Neapolitan general Franceschetti, the son-in-law of his host.

XVII.

Corsica, as we have before said, was then fluctuating in a sort of interregnum favourable to the anarchy of the three principal parties which divided it,—the Bonapartists, the partisans of England, and the friends of the house of Bourbon; and still more favourable to the personal enterprises which an illustrious chief, stirring and popular like the King of Naples might wish to attempt there, whether to govern the island, or to recruit there adherents and instruments of adventures and expeditions elsewhere. The feeble garrisons of Calvi, of Bastia, and of Ajaccio, did not consist of more than a few hundred men, an insufficient number to impose obedience, or even peace, on the three existing parties, rooted in the island, masters of the mountains, and always in arms and in observation to avail themselves of the chances which events might offer them. The white flag was flying in the port, and on the belfries of the island, the only sign of the submission of the country to the government of Louis XVIII. The military command of the island was exercised provisionally, and almost officiously, by the Colonel of Gendarmerie Verrière.

The military commandant summons Murat to surrender himself.

XVIII.

As soon as this military commandant, of Bastia, who was informed of the arrival of the King of Naples in Corsica, had learned that Murat was at Viscovato, urged by his own zeal, and by the zeal of the royalists of his party, to act against the fugitive of Toulon, he sent him by an official messenger, a summons to put himself into his hands, until the King of France should have decided on his fate. Murat, already sheltered at Viscovato by the inviolable hospitality of the Colonnas, and being soon surrounded by peasants, by shepherds, and by old soldiers armed for his protection, refused to obey; alleging as a motive for his refusal the absence of all legal and sovereign authority in the island. On receipt of this answer Colonel Verrière published a proclamation which declared Murat, King of Naples, an enemy to the King of France, and a disturber of the public peace. A detachment of 400 men, supported by a corps of gendarmes, marched to Viscovato, to execute the orders of government, and to seize on the person of Murat.

But Murat was already an impregnable power in the very heart of the lofty and warlike mountains in which he was cantoned. With some, hereditary devotion to the Colonna family, under whose roof he resided—with others, the sacred rights of hospitality, which no political sentiments would make them forget or betray,—with one class the adventurous popularity of the King of Naples,—with another the memory of the old wars in which they had served under his orders,—with the most ambitious, the hope of sharing his dangers and the spoils of an expedition of this old sovereign to reconquer his kingdom,—with the mercenary, the pay which Murat distributed out of the sums he had brought with him, or which he drew from Paris,—all these considerations had collected at Viscovato, around the King of Naples some thousand of defenders, armed and ready for any thing to save, to follow, or to avenge this popular outlaw. The detachment sent from Bastia, intimidated by the number and re-

Murat's projects.

solution of his partisans, and by the natural strength of his position, returned without its prey to Bastia.

XIX.

Murat was earnestly pressed by his little army, and by the attachment of the mountaineers, to raise the standard of insular independence in his own name, and to seize upon Bastia. This, however, he declined, still affirming that he did not wish to undertake anything against the King of France, and that he limited himself to providing for his own safety and dignity, under the guardianship of his warlike hosts. But his partisans around him were already doing violence to his reserve, whether pretended or sincere, and boldly recruited men, arms, munition, and subsidies for his cause. He shut his eyes to all this, and seemed himself to fluctuate undecided between an insurrection in the island in his favour, and an expedition to the shores of his ancient kingdom. The certainty of failing against Europe, after a momentary success in the island of Corsica, and the mediocrity of the conquest proportioned to its danger, turned him from the first idea, and precipitated him into the second. Despair above all, and the ambition of imitating and surpassing Napoleon, by returning to Naples and maintaining himself there, drove him blindfold into this fatal step of his life. His pecuniary resources becoming exhausted, he could not support the weight of idleness, nor the humiliation of a private and obscure life, after a life of tumult in camps, and of splendour on a throne. Domestic troubles also added their secret bitterness and incitement to his political reverses. He adored his wife, young, beautiful, ambitious, and greedy of power and splendor. He was jealous of the supposed mental favour she evinced towards some young generals of his court, whose counsels she had sometimes seemed to prefer to his own policy. He felt humbled at having deprived her of a throne to which she had elevated him by her union with him. He was impatient to replace her upon it by the boldness of his genius, and by the bravery of his heart; and

He decides on going to Naples.

he was indignant at the vulgar rank in which he would have to leave his children, whom he adored like their mother. His heart disturbed his head. He was seized with the vertigo of pride, of love, and of the throne. During his three week's residence amongst the mountains, he indulged in the delirium or the illusions which he needed as a justification of his madness.

XX.

"I am adored at Naples," he said to his confidants, "and how could it be otherwise? I have done nothing but good to the Neapolitans, whom I governed with my heart, and whose military name I raised in the field, by covering it with my own exploits. I gave freedom to the people. I elevated the nobility, I gave courage to the soldiers, I loved the peasantry, I civilized, I administered, I enriched the kingdom. I still hear from this place the acclamations of the multitude on my route, every time I returned in triumph to my capital, from our campaigns with the grand army. Great heaven? what memories do these applauses of a nation awaken in my soul! Naples and my people beset me by their continual presence!" Then melting into tears at these pictures: "It is too much," he exclaimed, "I can no longer live or die but for my people. We shall see Naples, we shall see Naples, let us hasten our departure!"

XXI.

It was in vain that some general officers, more calm and more faithful to his interests than to his illusions, represented to him the dangers of the enterprise; Europe in arms, Austria and her armies on his frontiers, the Bourbons of Sicily but just restored to their kingdom, and not having yet had time to exhaust the enthusiasm and popularity of their restoration, the army vanquished and broken up, its officers again attached to the Bourbons by family souvenirs, by duty, by oath, and by interest; the rapid oblivion which follows the calamities of fate and

Arrival of Macirone.

absence, a vigilant police and numerous Shirri* from Sicily, spying out the sentiments and feelings of the people, the difficulty of disembarking, the paucity of resources, of arms, of soldiers and of munitions, the absence of all pretext or reason for raising the people, and a certain captivity or tragical death on the soil of a kingdom which could not brook two kings.

Nothing however could shake his resolution; for he had the regal monomania. He was determined to consider men and things only in the light which smiled upon his wishes, and which reflected back the false colouring of his warm and lively imagination. Intelligent, but unreflecting, like all the men of the south, Murat had all his life had occasion for a head to think for him. Wherever he had gone alone, he had gone astray. His mind, though full of fire, had but little light. It served more to dazzle than to guide him on his way.

XXII.

It was in the midst of these perplexities, but when his heart, decided before his understanding, was already entirely bent on a landing at Naples, that his old aide-de-camp, correspondent, and negociator at Paris, Colonel Macirone, arrived in the island with the sanction of government, and demanded to be conducted to Viscovato, to bear to the King the intentions and safe-conduct of the allied powers. It was too late. The King was constantly repeating this axiom, which served as the heroic excuse for his resolution: "For a King who has lost his crown nothing remains but the death of a soldier." He was moreover convinced, and repeated incessantly to his confidants, that if he gave himself up to the apparent generosity of Europe, his tomb would speedily be built by the side of his prison.

Macirone, before he appeared in the presence of his old master, confided to the commandant of Bastia, and to the English and Neapolitan agents, who were sent thither to turn Murat from his enterprise and dissuade his adherents, the

* Satellites of Justice.

Murat's march to Ajaccio.

mission with which he was charged for him. Amongst others he saw the two brothers Carabelli, Corsicans by birth, who had formerly served in the British army, and who had been confidentially sent from Naples by Medici, the minister of police; not to instigate, as it has been thought, but to turn away Murat from his enterprise. The court of Naples had already its suspicions. It was alarmed, and kept watch, but it had no occasion to lay a deadly snare for a man who so madly threw himself into it of his own accord. Macirone and the two Carabellis, the former anxious for the King and for the success of his negotiation, the others in the interest of Naples, and of the minister Medici, who employed them, saw each other at Bastia, conferred with the military government of that city, and having learned that Murat was going to Ajaccio by one road, they went thither by another, to stop him by their counsels at the last step.

XXIII

But nothing could any longer restrain him. On the 17th September, he mounted his horse at Viscovato, surrounded by a little army of Corsican volunteers, and of all the dependants of the Colonna family. He marched to Ajaccio, the second capital of the island, amidst cries of "Long live the King of Naples!" and the good wishes of the whole population, whom he had captivated during his long residence with the Colonnas by his grace, his familiarity, his martial eloquence, and his fame. This army was principally composed of Generals Franceschetti and Natali, who had rejoined him in Corsica, unemployed sub-officers and soldiers, residing in the island, who had hastened at the sound of his name around their ancient general, of a selection of the most warlike of those *Condottieri*, whom the perpetual and reciprocal vengeance of families, at variance with each other had driven into the forests, and accustomed daily to the bivouac and petty warfare with the troops; and finally, of those shepherds from the lofty pasture grounds of the island, and of those young villagers, who tend their flocks or labour with gun-in-hand, and to whom the use of arms is familiar from infancy. Murat, in his half military,

Appearance of the country.

half regal costume, with which he affected to fascinate the eyes of the French soldiers, followed by the principal chiefs of the family which had shown him hospitality, and by his generals in uniform, behind the guides of his advance-guard of mountaineers, marched at the head of this column, an escort in the eyes of some, an army in the eyes of others, according as the gates of Ajaccio, where he had established some communication, should open or shut at his name. He rode one of those long-haired little Corsican stallions, whose sure footing, eye of fire, bold heart, and ear accustomed to musketry, constitute the battle-steed of these mountain warfares. The rocks, the ravines, the skirts of the forests were covered with women and children, grouped upon the route to witness the passage of a hero and a King.

The wild magnificence of the landscape scenery he was passing through added something still farther of picturesque and oriental grandeur to the spectacle. The abrupt pathways by which he had to cross the granite heart of the island to go to Ajaccio, mounted upwards, plunged down, and meandered by turns through the mountains, the ravines, the abysses, and the venerable forests of firs, of oaks, and of chestnuts, whose elevation renders them inaccessible to the axe of man. Southern Alps, framed in by a vast sea, where the deep splendour of the sky, the solitude, the rudeness, and the silent majesty of nature, impress upon the heart of man the energy, the loftiness, and the profundity which they themselves display.

XXIV.

All the villages which Murat had to pass through, apprised of his coming, proud of showing him hospitality, and already rendered zealous in his cause by his emissaries, went to meet him, with their chiefs, their magistrates, and their priests. He slept the first night at Cotonè, in the house of the curate Galvani, whose brother, a commissary general of Napoleon's wars, went with the King as one of his staff. He remained there on the 18th, to recruit some new soldiers. On the 19th he breakfasted at the hamlet of Peselli-Danisani, in the

Dispositions of the Emperor's family.

house of the principal inhabitant, Manuelli. Then, with his followers, who increased in numbers at every cabin on his route, passing over the lofty gorges of La Serra, he encamped that evening at St. Pierre-de-Venaco. The curate of Vivaro, Pantalacci, afforded him hospitality on the 20th, and escorted him with his villagers, for the remainder of the day through the primitive forests of Vizzavona. When descending Bocconano, he met Lieutenant-Colonel Bonelli, who had come to meet him with all his village. He there awaited the remainder of his little army, which had marched slower than himself, and he sent General Franceschetti to Ajaccio, to announce his approach and his intentions, commissioned also to treat with the principal people of the city, and with the royal authorities. He awaited at Bocconano to await the result of his conferences.

XXV.

Franceschetti applied first to the Arrighis, a family loaded with gifts, with titles, and with honours by Bonaparte. He found assembled there all the principal members of the Emperor's family, resident or refugees in the island. The resentment of these relations of Napoleon against Murat, whom they accused of having contributed to his ruin, and the prudence natural to islanders, which made them more than any others dread the appearance of mixing themselves up with plots against the Bourbons, to whom their name had already made them greater objects of suspicion, inspired this family council with an inflexible aversion to this compromising temerity of the King of Naples. They addressed to his general the most bitter and insulting reproaches against a king who, after having been crowned by the hand of their family, and after having fought against it with the coalition, had come again to persecute it with his ambition, and to ruin it, even in the island where it was hiding its misfortunes. They sternly conjured Franceschetti to deter his master from entering Ajaccio, and thereby to impart to a peaceable and submissive town the appearance of a place in open insurrection against the King of France. Franceschetti returned to report to the King the evil disposition of his rela-

He enters Ajaccio.

tives ; but Murat, now surrounded by his whole army, and urged on by the less reflecting enthusiasm of the people, and of the soldiers of the garrison of Ajaccio, would listen to nothing, and remounting his horse he advanced towards the city.

XXVI

His entry was a triumph. The people overwhelmed their authorities. The civil magistrates and the military commandant restrained with difficulty the five hundred French soldiers of the garrison in the fortress, the gates of which they kept shut solely to prevent them from mingling with the people and with the army of the King. They were seen leaning unarmed on the parapets of the fortifications, gazing on the triumphal entry of the old brother-in-arms of their Emperor, applauding the demonstrations of the multitude, and mingling their cries of "Long live the King of Naples!" with the acclamations of the army, the city, and the port. Murat would not accept the public palace, which the multitude pressed him to enter in token of sovereignty. He made them conduct him to an ordinary inn in the square ; and before he dismounted he harangued the people, who had crowded closely round him. He told them that he had only come to Ajaccio to ask for simple and inoffensive hospitality ; and that if his presence was made a cause of sedition, or disturbance in the city, he would immediately quit it again. He sent his officers to bear the same assurance to the authorities, satisfied with having braved them, not wishing to push his victory beyond the object he had in view, happy only in being favoured in his designs against it by the ascendant of his popularity, and by the kingly part which he was enjoying for the last time in the island of his benefactor and of his enemy.

XXVII.

"His Majesty the King of Naples seeks an asylum," thus the chief of his staff wrote by his orders to the mayor of Ajaccio. "He has given a preference to the place where his

Enthusiasm of the people of Ajaccio.

family reside ; believing himself to be in the midst of his own relatives when amongst the inhabitants of this city. He will live there as a private individual, and only asks the authorities for the protection due to honour and misfortune.

The naval officer, Blancard, who performed the duties of his private secretary, wrote from the King's dictation to Colonel Verrière, commanding the military division, a long despatch, intended for publication, and which contained the following : " The King has read with indignation your proclamation against him to the inhabitants and soldiers of the island ; this proclamation is false and indecent ; for it denounces to the dagger of the assassin, the King and the persons who have given an asylum to an unfortunate prince, to a captain whose services, rank, and reverses render him sacred in the eyes of all civilised nations."

Murat enjoyed to intoxication the empire he exercised over the people of Ajaccio. He contemplated their demonstrations every moment under his windows, and made his friends observe them ; he saw in them an augury of the enthusiasm which he hoped soon to find again on the soil of his kingdom. He hastened the preparations for his expedition, which was freighting and arming at full liberty in the port, under the eyes of the powerless authorities, and of the soldiers of the garrison, accomplices at least in their hearts and good wishes. He placed his jewels in pledge to obtain the necessary funds for the equipment of his little squadron.

XXVIII.

Meanwhile Macirone had arrived with the two brothers Carabelli. The former having requested an audience with his old master, it was granted immediately. The inn in which the King resided was only designated by the flag of the two-Sicilies displayed over the door, and by the sentinels and the armed mountaineers who guarded the entrance. Macirone, who was received with tenderness, but with embarrassment, by the King, reported to him the success of his negotiation ; and delivered to him a note from Prince Metternich, containing the conditions

His evasive reply to the offer of Austria.

on which the King of Naples would be admitted to the hospitality of Austria. These were:

1. That the King should assume the name of a private individual.

2. That he should choose his residence, either in town or country, in Bohemia or Upper Austria.

3. That he should pledge his word not to quit the Austrian States without the consent of the Emperor, and that he should submit himself there to the laws of the country.

To these conditions were added a passport for Trieste, if the King wished to make use of it. He took the passport and reserved the discussion of the conditions until he should be reunited to his family. This evasive reply recalled the ambiguity of his attitude between Napoleon and the allies in 1814. Furnished with this passport if destiny was adverse to him in the expedition he was about to attempt, free from the conditions which he would not accept if he succeeded, he refused, under the pretext of the omission of his regal title in the despatches, the written offer made to him by the captain of an English frigate, which was placed at his disposal by the British government to conduct him to Trieste. The two brothers Carabelli were afterwards admitted to an audience, and exerted themselves to point out to him the dangers of his enterprise, but failed in convincing him.

He invited them to his table with Macirone. Generals Natali and Franceschetti, six colonels, and his principal officers, also formed part of the company. The conversation turned upon Waterloo—"Ah!" exclaimed the King, "if I had been there, I feel assured that the fate of the world would have been changed. The French cavalry was madly engaged, it was sacrificed in detail, when its charge *en masse* at the decisive moment would have surmounted everything!" His thoughts flowed freely, and the conversation was varied and turned on indifferent subjects. After dinner he took Macirone into his cabinet, and said to him that the first ambiguous answer which he had given him in the morning to the offers of Austria, had a double meaning, little suited to his honour and his rank, that

His letter to Colonel Macirone.

he reproached himself with it, and that he would give him another more frank and sincere, as to his real intentions. Then sitting down before his writing-table, he indited a letter with his own hand, which contained his thoughts and complaints without reserve.

"I appreciate my liberty," he said in this letter, "above every other possession of this world. Captivity or death is the same to me. What treatment can I expect from those who hired assassins against me at Marseilles? I saved the life of the Marquis de Rivière, who had been condemned to die on the scaffold; I obtained his pardon from the Emperor. Detestable truth, notwithstanding, he has excited wretches against me, and set a price upon my head! Wandering in the woods and mountains, I have confided my life to the generous fidelity of three French officers, who brought me to Corsica at the peril of their own lives. Some wretches have said that I have brought treasures with me from Naples! I expended there, on the contrary, in improving my kingdom, all the wealth I had brought from my principality of Berg. I cannot accept the conditions that you have brought me, Monsieur Macirone! They constitute my abdication, I am only permitted to live. Is this the respect due to an unfortunate sovereign, recognised by the whole of Europe, and who at a critical moment decided the campaign of 1815, in favour of these same powers who now pursue him with their hatred and ingratitude? I have not abdicated! I have a right to recover my crown, if God will give me strength and means to do it! My presence in Naples can no longer injure any one; I cannot correspond with Napoleon, a captive at St. Helena! When you receive this letter I shall be already at sea, advancing to meet my destiny. I shall either succeed or terminate my life with my enterprise. I have dared death a thousand times in fighting for my country, and shall I not be allowed to dare it once in my own cause? I have only one anxiety, the fate of my family!"

After having given these lines to a secretary to be copied, he signed them, and dismissed his former aide-de-camp with an embrace

Sailing of Murat's expedition.

XXIX.

The report of a cannon at one o'clock in the morning, amidst the silence that prevailed, awoke Macirone with a start, and informed him that the signal for embarkation was given by the King to his fellow adventurers in the hazards of the war. He had, in fact, embarked with them. This cannon-shot was, some minutes after, followed by several others from the battlements of the fort of Ajaccio. This was a vain pretence of opposition to the expedition of the King of Naples, procured with difficulty and supplication from the soldiers by the officers of the garrison. The artillerymen secretly favouring the adventurous cause of Murat, and restrained by discipline alone within an apparent neutrality, had loaded the guns as if to fire on the squadron, but they designedly took aim over the vacant sea. These discharges lost in the waves, were more a salute than an act of hostility. The King and his army were already sailing at liberty towards the coast of Italy.

Six light vessels with decks, feluccas or bomb-ketches, composed the whole flotilla of Murat. The vessel which bore the King was commanded by Baron Barbara, captain of a frigate in the Neapolitan service; Courand commanded the second, having under him Captain Pernice and Lieutenant Maltedo; Ettore the third, Mattei the fourth, and Semidei the fifth. The sixth vessel, a better sailer and more manageable than the others, served as an advice boat, and was commanded by a simple pilot named Ceconi. The officers, and the two hundred and fifty sub-officers and soldiers, which formed the whole army of the King's expedition, were distributed amongst these frail vessels, in proportion to their respective sizes. The flotilla was under sail in view of Corsica at daybreak on the 28th of September. On the 29th they made little way for want of wind. On the 30th a squall threw them on the coast of Sardinia, where they narrowly escaped shipwreck. The overloaded vessels took shelter for a whole day in a creek of the uninhabited island of Tavolara, a vast rock in the form of an ancient altar, detached from Sardinia.

Murat enters San Lucido.

On the 2nd of October they put to sea again, struggling with difficulty against the waves, for five days and four nights, and only reached at night-fall, on the 6th, the coast of Calabria, in sight of the mountains of Paolo. The land lay about three leagues distance from the vessels, which were then altogether.

XXX.

The commander of the fleet, Barbara, ordered all fires above and below decks to be extinguished, to avoid revealing the presence of unknown ships upon the coast. It was agreed that the vessels keeping company together should make signals to each other only by the sparks produced by the collision of flint and steel, in order that the look-out men on the shore might mistake these fugitive lights for the phosphorescent appearances on the sea during the summer nights. The wind blew from the mountains of Calabria, as if providence was desirous of repelling the King from destruction. The vessels obliged to beat up with difficulty in a hollow sea, to make the land in the roadstead of Paolo, were separated in the darkness from each other by a sudden squall, blowing, after the moon had risen, from the stormy gorges of Lower Calabria. Driven from his original intention by the wind and sea, the King entered, at day-break, the secluded roadstead of San Lucido, with only two of his vessels, to await there the remainder of his scattered flotilla.

XXXI

The anchor was cast at some distance from the beach, and the King ordered the *chef de bataillon*, Ottaviani, to land with one seaman, sound the opinions of the peasants, and acquaint him with the result of his enquiries. Ottaviani and the seaman did not return, having been arrested a few steps from the beach by the inhabitants. This bad symptom disturbed the companions of Murat, amongst whom, since the preceding evening, a gloomy silence and a timid hesitation of evil augury had been observable. It appeared as if the sight

Hesitation and discouragement of the crew.

of the coast had suddenly presented to their eyes the danger of the enterprise they were about to brave, and which had hitherto been imperceptible amidst the illusions created by distance. The Italian shore however, made them susceptible of all these forebodings.

These men had neither personal cause, nor cause of duty, of country, or of honour, in this expedition; none of those motives, in short, which animate true heroism and support fortitude. Adventurers, in search of the easy fortune and capricious glory of an enterprise in which they had no real interest, the slightest doubt of success could dishearten them, and the least obstacle check them. They began to have a glimpse of their temerity, and without daring to confess it to themselves, to look behind them

XXXII

The day was drawing to a close, and the King did not see his vessels re-appear. The pilot Cèconi, commanding the advice boat, and which alone was anchored beside that of the King, in the roadstead of San Lucido, was sent by Murat at the close of day, to discover at sea or behind the neighbouring capes, the other vessels, and to rally them around him. Cèconi discovered the vessel commanded by Courand, and brought her in. Being interrogated by the King as to the fate of the other vessels, he replied that he had lost sight of them during the squall the preceding evening. Two officers of the land troops on board the vessel of this captain, confided to Murat their suspicions as to the intentions of Courand, whom they believed to be plotting with his crew, the desertion at sea, and abandonment of the King. Murat summoned Courand on board his vessel, reminded him of the benefits with which he had loaded him at Naples, and pretended to have greater confidence in him, to induce him to abandon the idea of deceiving him.

The King, however, prudently ordered Captain Barbara, commandant of the flotilla, to take Courand's vessel in tow, to deprive him of all pretext of separating from the squadron. This vessel had on board fifty chosen men, sub-officers,

Desertion of Courand with his crew.

and soldiers, the bravest and most warlike of the whole expedition.

At midnight the three vessels of the King weighed anchor in silence, and the flotilla made sail towards another creek on the coast, hoping to fall in with the other vessels at sea. But before daylight could reveal his flight Captain Courand, having sent the soldiers down between decks, to conceal them as he said, from the look-out men on the shore, cut, while they were asleep, the hawser which attached his vessel to the poop of the King's, and concealed by the fog made sail for Corsica, telling the soldiers when they awoke that the King had abandoned the enterprise, and had ordered him to go before him to Trieste.

XXXIII.

At the first dawn of day the King was dismayed at the desertion of Courand, who had served seven years in his guard, and who thus betrayed his master at the critical moment. Having no more with him now than his own crew, and the handful of men embarked in the advice boat of the pilot Ceconi, he wavered in his resolution, and directed the commandant of his flotilla, Barbara, to steer for Trieste. Barbara affirmed that his crews were not in a condition to undergo so long a voyage in the Adriatic, with their present paucity of sailors and provisions; but he offered the King to go ashore in the neighbouring little port of Pizzo, to hire there a stronger vessel, to get a crew and provisions, and to return and join the King who was to stand out to sea in the advice boat. But to effect this it was necessary that Murat should confide to Barbara his Austrian passports for Trieste, the only documents which could warrant the landing, and protect the person and transactions of Barbara on shore. The King refused to part with his safe-conduct, which he reserved doubtless as a last resource of flight in case of disaster. Barbara persisted in not landing without this indispensable guarantee of his safety, and an angry altercation took place between him and the King. "You hear him," exclaimed Murat indignantly, addressing

The expedition lands at Pizzo.

his officers. "He refuses to obey me! Well, then, I shall go on shore myself! My memory is fresh in the hearts of the Neapolitans; they will recognise me!"

He then ordered all his officers to put on their uniforms. General Natali, alone, not having any uniform, the King murmured loudly at this negligence or prudence of the general. "It was not when following me to danger," said he, "that you should have forgotten your military dress!"

During these altercations, these murmurs, and reproaches on board, the fresh breeze was rapidly impelling the two vessels, on a brilliant sea and under a glowing sun, towards the Calabrian coast, where rose half-way up the hill the white castle and houses of the little port of Pizzo. It was eleven o'clock in the morning on the 8th October. The sun was smiling as if to lure them to destruction.

XXXIV..

At the moment when the two vessels cast anchor, at a cable's length from a deserted beach, a short distance from the port of Pizzo, the generals and officers wished to land first. The King kept them back by a gesture, and making them stand behind him on the deck: "It is my duty," said he, "to be the first to land on this field of glory, or this field of death. Mine is the precedence, as the responsibility is mine," and he stepped boldly upon the beach. The two generals, Franceschetti and Natali, accompanied by twenty five officers, sub-officers, soldiers, or personal servants, landed after him; and collecting in a body behind the King, followed his footsteps, his movements, and his gestures.

The presence of these unknown vessels in the solitary roadstead, the number and costume of the passengers, the anchor cast without waiting for a visit from the coast-guard, the tumult, the rapidity, and the noise of the landing, had roused the attention of the sailors of the port, and the idlers of the shipping. The beach where the King had landed was covered with groups, few in number, astonished, undecided, and keeping at a certain distance from the party formed by

Murat's reception by the people.

the King and his suite. A guard of Marine Artillery, fifteen in number, issuing from an isolated tower, which served them as a guard-house, advanced at the noise, but irresolutely, towards the King. They still wore the uniform of his army. "There are my soldiers," cried Murat walking towards them. "My children recognise your King!" Raising his hat at these words, and proudly elevating before the soldiers his handsome head, lit up by the sun, shaking the long locks that waved on his shoulders, to impress strongly upon their eyes that martial figure which had been so often engraved in their memories at reviews or camps. "Yes, it is I, your King Joachim; say if you recognise me, and if you will follow and serve me still; me the friend of the soldiers, the brother of the Neapolitans!"

Murat's companions supported these words and gestures of their chief, by raising their hats in the air, and crying out: "Long live King Joachim!" holding out their hands to the soldiers and Calabrese, who were attracted by this spectacle around them. The soldiers, without a chief, petrified by this sudden apparition of a beloved king, whose image was preserved in the imaginations of these poetical people as that of their hero, saluted him with their arms. Some of them mechanically repeated the cry, "Long live King Joachim!" like an excitable people who echo every acclamation. Some others retired in silence to await the event. Five or six replied that they were ready to follow and to fight under him, to reconquer his throne, and to deliver the kingdom from the tyranny of the Austrians.

XXXV.

During these colloquies the inhabitants of Pizzo, informed by public rumour of the landing of some armed men proclaiming King Joachim and having this proscribed prince at their head, hastened, incredulous at first, to the shore, where they were harangued by Murat. Then, seeing the small number of his adherents, the two dismantled vessels near the shore, this handful of sub-officers and soldiers, Sardinians,

Impolicy of landing in Calabria.

Corsicans, Genoese, sunburnt and sallow after their rough passage, their clothing soiled with foam and sand, more like a band of pirates than the escort of a King, they passed from incredulity to astonishment, from astonishment to contempt, and from contempt to indignation and anger. Some surrounded the King at a distance, which indicated repulsion rather than respect; while others, already determined on outrage, returned murmuring to the town for their guns, to fight, in the name of their legitimate King, the usurper and outlaw who came to tempt their fidelity.

Calabria was the most unfortunate point of landing that could be chosen by Murat to effect a rising of the people in the name of French popularity. The population of these provinces, the most fanatic and warlike of the kingdom, close to Sicily, whence the old court always inspired them with hatred of French dominion, excited to insurrection in 1799 by Cardinal Ruffo, whom they had proclaimed at once their general and their pontiff, had since then been incessantly agitated by Bourbon conspiracies. Finally, kept down by terror, pacified but oppressed, decimated, shot at the first symptom of agitation by the French general Marchès, they had been raised again in insurrection on the news of the first disasters of the French in Lower Italy.

To present to these provinces, so recently returned under the government of their ancient royal family and their priests, the flag of French domination, was to offer them what they regarded as the flag of tyranny, of usurpation, of irreligion, and of treason. Calabria was for Murat what a landing in La Vendée would have been for Napoleon, his model, three months after the Vendean restoration of the princes of the house of Bourbon.

Nearer to Naples and to the central provinces of the kingdom, Murat, perhaps, would have had more chances and more popular opinions in his favour.

The people were already assembling, interrogating, and encouraging one another to fidelity, and were arming at the call of the principal inhabitants of the town, on the public place of Pizzo. Murat lost some moments in waiting for a

Excitement of the people against Murat.

movement in his favour which never took place. The shore became deserted, vacancy appeared around him; fatal indication! Where fortune is, men flock around her banner.

XXXVI.

The relationship between the royal houses of Naples and of Spain, and the double domination of two kingdoms by one and the same dynasty, have left in the provinces of Sicily, or of Naples, immense fiefs belonging to the great families of Spain. The Duke de l'Infantado possessed considerable territory around Pizzo; and his agent exercised that influence and authority over the population of the town which a generous chieftainship acquires over a vassal tenantry. This agent, who was popular at Pizzo, having heard of the landing of Murat, was faithful to the house of Bourbon, whose cause was heroically supported by his master in Spain. He made his appearance on the public place, mingled with the people, who canvassed his thoughts; demonstrating to them the crime and the madness of an insurrection against the legitimate King, and the honour and reward of a courageous fidelity, he won over without difficulty the hearts of all, predisposed already against any complicity with Murat. The people responded to the agent of the Duke de l'Infantado by a cry of "To arms!" and by imprecations and threats of death against Murat. To march against him they only waited for an accession of numbers and arms better suited to the occasion.

XXXVII.

Two young men of Monteleone, a neighbouring city, the capital of Calabria, who witnessed this fermentation of the people, and who appeared to take an interest in the new comers, hastened to the beach, approached the King, reported to him what was passing in the town, apprised him of the danger he was running in remaining on the coast, and advised him to throw himself boldly upon the route to Monteleone, where public opinion being more favourable, and the garrison more

Murat takes the route to Monteleone.

easily seduced, would open to him the gates of his kingdom. They offered to guide him thither; and Murat, without having time for reflection, and ashamed to re-embark while he could yet do anything, took their advice for inspiration. He accepted the guidance of the two Calabrians, made a sign to his companions to rise, and ordered the artillerymen to follow him. Some of these soldiers did follow him; in fact, more from a habit of obedience than from any interest they took in his cause, so much are soldiers imposed upon by the uniform and the word of command.

XXXVIII.

The feeble column, composed in all of forty or fifty persons, several of whom were idlers seeking to gratify their curiosity, and some were enemies, followed the steps of the guides and of Murat up the steep road which scaled the hills. This road leads towards Monteleone, leaving Pizzo on the right, and having the sea at its feet. The uniforms and the muskets of the King's escort shone brilliantly in the sun, amongst the stems of the olive trees, towards the summit of the ascent, near the upland where the road slopes gently; whilst a more numerous column, more confused and sombre in appearance, armed with long carabines, and wearing the high conical shaped hats of the Calabrese, began to form at the gate of the town on the shore. It could not be discerned from the vessels at anchor if this column was forming to follow or to fight that of the King.

Murat did not well know this himself; for, like all men who attempt impossibilities, he had a taste and a necessity for illusions. In spite of the warning of his guides and the coldness exhibited on his landing, he flattered himself that the popularity of his name, the certainty of his presence, and the boldness of his march, were drawing these undecided people on to follow him. Harassed with fatigue and heat by the steep ascent he had been climbing, his legs unaccustomed to motion during the eight days he had passed at sea, on board a vessel whose size forbade the exercise of his limbs, he sat down at the sum-

His meeting with Trenta Capelli

mit of the acclivity on the root of an olive tree, to wipe the perspiration from his brow, to breathe a moment, and to reflect on his position.

He seemed to expect with impatience the column of people he beheld from this height upon the shore, without asking himself what their intentions might be. He asked the group of artillerymen who had followed him, where their comrades were. They pointed them out to him, mingled with the people and beginning to ascend the hill. To see them the better, Murat got up, quitted the high road, and ascended to a grove of olive trees, whence the eye took in, as from a promontory, the town, the sea, the shore, and the windings of the declivity. He there persisted, in spite of the entreaties of his guides, in waiting for the second detachment of artillerymen and the crowd who surrounded them.

XXXIX.

At this moment a colonel of the royal gendarmerie, mounted, and in uniform, appeared upon the road, on a level with the hillock where the King was reposing and observing the movements on the shore. This was a chief of Calabrian bands, famous in the partisan wars of these provinces against the French, an agent of Queen Caroline and of Cardinal Ruffo, for a long time a mountain adventurer, and who had become commandant of the regular *Sbirri* of Monteleone since the restoration of King Ferdinand. His name was Trenta Capelli. The colonel stopped in the midst of the group of officers and soldiers who remained on the road waiting for the King.

Murat called him and summoned him to join his enterprise; but the blood of three brothers of Trenta Capelli, shed on the scaffold by the French during the Calabrian insurrections, forbade him to join the murderers of his family. He did not evince, however, too lively a repugnance to the invitation of the King; and contented himself with saying to him, as he pointed to the flag of the two Sicilies on the castle of Pizzo, "My king is he whose colours fly over the kingdom!" Murat,

Hostilities of the people.

instead of detaining him by force, conversed with him, and allowed him to continue his route to the town

XL

Trenta Capelli had scarcely accosted the people and the artillerymen ascending towards the King, when he returned with them, advanced a few paces in front of his troops, called upon Murat, and respectfully requested him to follow him to Pizzo. Murat still deceived, or feigning to be so, as to the intentions of the armed crowd who were advancing towards his followers, went down the road with Trenta Capelli, surrounded by Generals Franceschetti and Natali, and by his officers, who conjured him in vain to get away from these people, and march upon Monteleone.

"My children," he said to the crowd, "do not fire upon your old King! I have not landed in Calabria to fight with you, but to go to Monteleone, and to ask there the assistance of the authorities in order to pursue my passage to Trieste, where I am to join my wife and children. If you had listened to me on the beach at Pizzo, you would have seen that I have a safe conduct for the Austrian states, which your King Ferdinand himself must recognise and respect."

The crowd replying only by their shouts, with their muskets presented, and their advance accelerated at the words thrown away by Murat, he fell back rapidly into the midst of his twenty-eight soldiers, who had remained a few paces in rear to intimidate the multitude by the front they showed. A confused discharge from the crowd and the artillerymen was poured in upon the King's group, which killed Captain Maledo at his feet, and wounded Lieutenant Pernice and several of his soldiers. Murat only replied by raising his hat, saluting the people, and conjuring them to listen to him. A second discharge still further thinned his ranks; while the armed multitude increased upon the road, and extended on the flanks to prevent the King from returning towards the sea.

He has now no other asylum in this land, which he came to conquer, than the vessels which had brought him

thither. He flies, therefore, followed by Franceschetti, Natali, and eight or ten sub-officers, across the fields towards the shore. He receives, without being struck, the fire of some carabines, and succeeds in gaining the beach, amidst the fire of the intimidated sharp-shooters. From the top of a rock which juts into the sea, he calls out with all the strength of his lungs, "Barbara! Barbara!" conjuring this commander of his vessel to send him a boat, and to draw nigh the shore. But the vessel having weighed anchor, when the firing resounded over the waves, is already in full sail for the open sea, carrying off, with the proclamations, the arms, the treasure, the munitions of the King—his last refuge and his life!

XLI.

Murat, and the four or five companions of his flight, had only been pursued across the vine and olive grounds in their way to the shore by some unarmed men, whom the fear of seeing the fugitives turn upon them kept at a distance. Colonel Trenta Capelli, the artillerymen, and the armed men of Pizzo, were occupied at the summit of the hill in firing on the twenty-four soldiers of Murat, disarming them, making them prisoners, and dragging them towards the town, bathed in their blood. The King and his friends had therefore time to escape captivity or death, if Barbara and Ceconi had tacked about at their cries, and sent a boat ashore; but Murat saw the soldiers and volunteers of Trenta Capelli coming down towards him, and his last resource flying from him at the same time.

In this perplexity, the King, seeing some fishermen's boats moored at some distance from him on the sands, threw himself into the water to seize upon one of them, to put the sea between himself and his enemies. But the boat being stranded, and having no water under its keel, resisted the efforts of the King and his followers to get it afloat. During these useless attempts, the crowd, who saw what he was about, called by gestures the *Sbirri* of Trenta Capelli, and surrounded the King still closer, without however daring, whether from

Murat is taken prisoner.

respect, from pity, or from fear, to fire upon him, or lay their hands upon his person.

Murat, unable to remove the large boat, threw himself alone, at some paces distance, into a small fishing boat, which was floating at anchor in deeper water. He had hardly got on board when he endeavoured to pull in the hawser, at the end of which was tied a large stone that served as an anchor to this frail bark. He was near succeeding when the poor fisherman who owned the boat, trembling at seeing the King carrying away his only means of existence, rushed into the water to save his all from the fugitive. The King knocked him down with the stroke of an oar, and continued drawing in the hawser and raising the stone; but a crowd of sailors and fishermen running up at the cries of their fallen comrade, rushed into the water, held back the hawser with their united strength, jumped into the boat, overthrew the king, took away his oar, tore his clothes, bruised his features, and dragging him, vanquished and bleeding, upon the beach, gave him into the custody of Trenta Capelli's men, overwhelmed with insults and outrage. These guards disputed with each other the possession of the prisoner, struck him in the face with the butt ends of their carabines, collared him, tore from him the rich orders which he wore in his hat and on his breast, and dragged him with the dead bodies of Pernice, of Giovanni, and seven others of his officers or servants, wounded and bathed in their blood, through the mob that always insult the fallen. They then threw them pellmell into the casemates of the little ruinous castle of Pizzo.

XLII.

Twice during his passage from the shore to the prison the King was menaced by the fury of the people, and the axe was raised above his head. Trenta Capelli, and the agent of the Duke de l'Infantado, satisfied with so illustrious a prize, and unwilling to tarnish their success with a crime, protected him against the poniards of the populace, made the assassins blush at their baseness, and placed volunteers and soldiers on guard at the castle to preserve the victims.

His intended proclamation.

The King was thrown upon a heap of straw, in the same vaulted room where his dead and wounded companions were staining with their blood the stones of the dungeon. Treinta Capelli ordered his clothes to be searched. They seized his passports, his diamonds, his money, a letter of credit for a million and a half of francs, which he had on a Neapolitan banker and the printed proclamation which he had drawn up at Viscovato, and which he intended to distribute throughout the kingdom.

This proclamation, which was long, diffuse, and full of sophisms but little understood by the people, indicated more the diplomatist than the soldier. It was rather a justification of his enterprise before Europe than a sympathetic appeal to the Neapolitans. It only exhibited the feelings of the human heart in some phrases alluding to the vicissitudes of his destiny. "I lived lonely," said he, "in one of those humble asylums which are more frequently found in virtuous poverty; there I braved the poniards of the assassins of the south, those cannibals, who, in all the epochs of the French revolution, have bathed in the blood of their fellow countrymen. I had decided on waiting in my retreat the end of that counter-revolutionary fever which is devouring France, to come and seek in your hearts an asylum against my misfortunes, and against the most unheard of and unjust persecutions, when I was compelled to withdraw!" This proclamation finished with the promise of a peaceful reign and a constitution, the ordinary and tardy penitence of all princes who have harassed the world with war or with tyranny.

XLIII.

Insults and menaces still resounded in the courts of the castle and in the dungeon of the prisoners, from the mouths of some fanatical lovers of blood and vengeance; but the greater number of the soldiers and volunteers felt for the unfortunate after the victory, and evinced for the King all the respect and consideration compatible with captivity.

Murat had not excited any personal hatred against himself during his reign, for he was equally humane in peace, as brave

Arrival of Captain Stratti.

and generous in war; and had never shed blood but in action. To be admired and beloved constituted the whole ambition of his life. When once disarmed, nobody could hate him. The agent of the Infantados, Alcalas, sent to the castle a dinner for the King, assistance for the wounded, mattresses, linen, clothes, refreshments, and comforts of every description. He honoured his masters, and the Spanish nation, by the generosity of his consideration towards a captive monarch.

XLIV.

Meanwhile, on the rumour of the landing and defeat of a band of factious persons, who had come to incite the kingdom to insurrection, the Neapolitan general, Nunziante, who commanded in Calabria, hastened to send to Pizzo Captain Stratti, a Greek by birth, and a stranger to the latter years of Neapolitan history, with a detachment to guard the prisoners, to ascertain their names and quality, and to prevent at the same time the escape and the massacre of the captives. They were still ignorant at Monteleone of the presence of King Joachim amongst this handful of adventurers. Stratti, on arriving at the castle, without passing through the town, and without attending much to the vague rumours of the arrest of the King, caused the captives to be immediately brought before him in the court yard, to interrogate them and draw up his report. A Corsican sergeant and soldier were the first who appeared and replied to his questions. "Who are you?" said Stratti to the third. "Joachim Murat, King of Naples," replied the King with dignity. Stratti confused at this presence of a King, in which he could scarcely yet believe, and seized with respect and compassion before his prisoner, cast down his eyes, and for the last time giving to the King the title of Majesty, as if by a bitter irony of fate, he had him conducted, with the kindness and consideration of a soldier who respects a hero, into a chamber more apart and more decent, where the King could at least collect his scattered thoughts without having constantly before his eyes the ruin, the blood, and the corpses of his friends

Arrival of General Nunziante.

XLV.

On receiving the report of Stratti, who confirmed the rumours spread at Monteleone, General Nunziante hastened thither himself before night. He sent couriers to Naples to acquaint the court and the ministers with this prodigious event, which had in the course of one hour, threatened and saved the crown of Ferdinand and the peace of the kingdom. He then presented himself before Murat.

General Nunziante was not one of those satellites of the camp who pass from one service to another, as their sword passes from hand to hand, and who preserve in their new cause, neither respect for themselves nor for those they have previously served; a description of men as common in the camp as in the court, who are moulded to adulation, baseness, and cruelty, by discipline and a thirst for promotion. He was a man of feeling and understanding, faithful to his king and country, but faithful also to gratitude and glory, towards him who had been his sovereign; a military man who knew how to reconcile in his own conduct the duties of nature with those of his position. He honoured Murat, and accosted him as a king fallen from his throne, but not from the respect and affection of his old subordinates. He pitied him, and reprobated the indignities and outrages he had suffered from the populace of Pizzo. He apologised for the necessity he was under of still leaving him in such a ruinous and unworthy abode, through anxiety for his safety, which required soldiers and stone walls to shelter him from insult. Surgeons were brought from Monteleone to assist the wounded. The night passed amidst the groans of the dying, and the silent reflections of the King on his fate.

The following day, General Nunziante conducted him into an apartment of the castle distinct from the prisons, and more suitably prepared for his reception. The countenance of the general betrayed more anxiety than that of his captive, for he began secretly to anticipate sinister orders from Naples. He dined at the King's table with the two Generals Franceschetti and Natali, the voluntary companions of their master in his

Murat's illusions as to his fate.

new prison. The conversation turned on the past wars, on the state of the kingdom and of Europe, and on the probable resolutions which King Ferdinand would take with respect to his competitor and captive. The King affected confidence in the generosity of his enemy, and in the inviolability of his own life, henceforth without danger for the kingdom. Nunziante did not venture to reveal to him all his apprehensions; but was careful, however, not to leave him in so full a security that the fall from it would be too sudden and too cruel. He spoke to him with uneasiness of a first telegraphic message, interrupted by the fog and by the night, which he had received in the morning. This despatch began: "A despatch informs me—— You will confine him——"

XLVI.

The day passed in expectation of a despatch, or a courier to complete the interrupted order of the preceding evening. The King received a visit from the captain of an English frigate, who proposed to Nunziante to take his prisoner to Tropea, a small town on the coast, where he would be better lodged, and more strictly guarded against popular commotions than at Pizzo. Nunziante did not dare to confide the captive, for whom he was answerable, without an authority from his court, to an English vessel and the accidents of the sea. In the evening, when at dinner with the King, he evinced further uneasiness as to the sense of the suspended despatch. "I hope, however," said he to the King, "that the meaning was to deliver your majesty to the English fleet, to be taken to Messina, there to await the decision of the allied powers."

"But, general," said Murat with a smile which seemed to anticipate the reply; "if, however, a telegraphic despatch ordered you to bring me before a military commission, would you do it?"

Nunziante replied that he would not obey such an order unless he received it from King Ferdinand himself, by a courier bearing his written wishes; but that such an order was not to be apprehended from the goodness of heart and

Feelings of the court of Naples on learning the landing of Murat.

generosity of Ferdinand. Murat, reassured and calm, arose from the table, went to bed with tranquillity, and before he slept made Natali read to him a tragedy of Metastasio, the catastrophe of which had some analogy to his own position ; after which he fell into a profound sleep.

On awaking the following morning, and at table, he conversed gaily with his guardians, and with Nunziante, on the facility of an amicable arrangement between Ferdinand and himself, by which he would cede Sicily to the Bourbons, and the Bourbons would recognise him as sovereign of Naples. The illusions of grandeur did not quit him any more than the illusions of life. The delay in the instructions from Naples made him believe that deliberations were taking place, which would result in a milder decision.

XLVII.

Meanwhile the court of Naples had received, at first by the telegraph from Monteleone, and afterwards by a courier sent by Nunziante, the news of the landing and the arrest of Joachim at Pizzo. The shadow even of Murat, the echo only of his name, still popular in the army, fascinating in the capital, and inciting in the provinces and all Italy, had thrown the court and the government into a confusion, which foreboded cowardly and sinister resolutions. In courts and political parties, as amongst the people, fear gives rise to ferocity. The souls of kings, of ministers, and of the great, are formed like those of the populace ; panic drives them into blood.

The heart of Ferdinand was not cruel. A sovereign swaddled from his infancy in the indolence, the voluptuousness, and the popular superstitions of the thrones of the south ; familiar even to vulgarity with the *lazzaroni* of the shore of Naples ; passionately fond of fishing, of hunting, and of women ; governed until then by a vindictive and imperious queen, who was just dead ; given up to mistresses ; intimidated by the priesthood ; served by ministers more kings than himself ; a man of understanding, however, but of that trivial and inactive understanding which makes a play of business, and laughs at

Character of Ferdinand.

its own idleness—he had occupied the throne for sixty years, despised and beloved at the same time by his subjects. His misfortunes, his long exile in Sicily, his age, and his good intentions made him dear at this moment to the Neapolitans. Great cruelties had signalised his reign in 1799; but the blood shed at that period, and which is attributed to his wife, to Cardinal Ruffo, to Admiral Nelson, and to Lady Hamilton, the favourite of the queen, and the mistress of that great officer, does not lie at the king's door. Nothing sinister could emanate from his heart, which was equally devoid of impulse for crime, as of constancy for virtue.

XLVIII.

But he was more susceptible of fear than of virtue. His court trembled around him. His ministers—and above all Medici, young, enlightened, and philosophic—leaned at first towards magnanimity, the only true prudence against defeated factions. But to humour the fears of the court upon which they were dependent, they themselves exhibited a degree of apprehension beyond the occasion. They feared, or affected to believe in the existence of ramifications of a plot in the capital and in the provinces. The guards of the palace were doubled, the streets encumbered with patrols, a division of the army was marched upon Naples, and another upon Calabria. The imagination of the King and of his confidants was overcast, as if threatened with some dreadful calamity. They would not see that an attempt of this nature, failing at the very threshold, against the fidelity of the people and the good sense of the public, was the best guarantee of safety for the kingdom, and, for the king, the noblest opportunity for greatness of soul, and of defiance to usurpation without peril.

Councils succeeded councils, and resolutions followed resolutions. When the court trembled, nobody dared to shew any confidence. The useless and ferocious order to immolate a prisoner without accomplices and without defence issued from the palace of the King on the night of the 9th of October, twenty four hours after the dethroned king, thrown almost in

He issues an order for Murat's trial.

spite of himself on the coast by the boisterous sea, had placed his foot on the soil of the kingdom, and was vanquished, insulted, and imprisoned by the people he came to incite to insurrection. This was a gratuitous shame for the court of Naples and its counsellors. By shedding a drop of the blood which chance had thrown into their power, the council dishonoured two thrones—unnecessarily stained with blood the hand of Ferdinand—made the natural return of the old dynasty into its kingdom a matter of contest—gave to the old monarchical right, which defends itself by its paternal love, the appearance of revolutionary force—killed a disarmed hero, and shed upon his tomb the interest of their own dastardly fears. It would almost appear in this enlightened age as if the King had sworn to dethrone himself, sometimes by weakness, sometimes by folly, and sometimes by vengeance.

However this may be the order was sent, and the prince of Canosa, the implacable instrument of conspiracies, of police, of reactions, and of the emigrants of the Sicilian court, set out at the same time; commissioned to watch, to purify, or to fanaticise Calabria, where he maintained a correspondence with the partisans of the counter-revolution. The order was as follows:—

“General Murat shall be brought before a military commission, the members of which shall be nominated by our Minister of War.

“There shall be granted to the condemned only one half-hour, to receive the consolations of religion.

(Signed), “FERDINAND.”

Thus the order for the trial did not admit even the supposition of an acquittal. The conditions of the execution preceded the sentence! The trial of Pizzo recalled that of Vincennes against the Duke d'Engbien.

It was a consolation for Murat at this supreme hour, that he did not recognise a retaliation of Providence in this mode of proceeding of Ferdinand, and that he had protested against the assassination of the son of the Condés, as unfortunate as himself, and more innocent.

Nunziante communicates the decree to Murat.

XLIX.

Nunziante, who had received this decree on the night of the 12th, would not curtail from the hours which still remained to the King, the sleep which at least abridged his agony. He entered, sat down at the foot of his prisoner's bed, wept in silence over him, and waited till Murat should awake himself. The sun had already been shining a long time on the slumbering head of the prisoner. At length, on opening his eyes he beheld the countenance of the general bathed in tears. He understood all before a word was spoken. Nunziante, however, after having tenderly pressed his hand, told him in a low voice the nature of the order of the court, which had arrived during the night, that the King might have time to prepare the heart of a man, and the countenance of a king, for the stroke he was going to receive in public. "Well then," said Murat, a moment after, resigning himself to a sentence which he had been far from considering as inevitable, "since it is so, I am lost! The order for my trial is that of my death!" A few tears stole into his eyes. The bravest men have their moments of weakness. Life itself utters a cry at extinction in the heart of a hero.

Nunziante left the King to his reflections, and retired silently. His two generals, and his valet-de-chambre, Armand, who would follow his master even in his temerity, were then sent out of the apartment.

Captain Stratti soon after entered, followed by seven officers of the army, into the chamber where Murat awaited them standing. Stratti, as compassionate as Nunziante, held down his head, and did not venture to look at the victim. He ranged to the right and left, a little in his rear, his colleagues of all ranks, facing the King. These seven military judges, appointed according to the order of the court, by the general commanding in Calabria, were all officers who had long been subjects, and companions in the campaigns of their King, Murat, and promoted by himself to their respective ranks in the army. Not one of them had the courage to refuse a mis-

Murat refuses to appear before the court-martial.

sion of murder. The courage of these men of the camp is in the arm rather than in the heart. They were going to try and condemn their old general and benefactor, as five months before they would have tried and condemned his enemies Human machines bereft of heart by constant subordination, and docile to the hands of all who reign.

Far from complaining they thanked King Ferdinand for a mark of confidence which did them honour, they said, and which put to the proof their recent fidelity to their new king

L.

Stratti at length read, stammering, to his prisoner the order by which he was to be brought before a military commission. He added that this commission was going to assemble immediately in an adjoining chamber, that the military law allowed a defender to the accused, and that General Nunziante had proposed to him for this last office the Sicilian captain Starace, a man of honour, equally devoted to humanity and his duty.

"Tell the tribunal," replied Murat, proudly raising his head, "that I refuse to appear before it. Men like myself are only accountable for their actions to God! Let the tribunal decide my fate, I shall submit to it, but I shall recognise no judges!"

Stratti and his colleagues retired to go and prepare the formalities of the court-martial. General Nunziante took pen, ink, and paper to the prisoner, himself, that he might express his last wishes, or write his last farewell to his family. Murat being left to himself wrote, as he bathed the paper with his tears, that sublime letter, in which his soul and his fate, his love as a husband, his passion as a father, his conscience as a king, and his courage as a soldier, were summoned up in a few lines, dictated by the final thrillings of his heart. He addressed them to his young wife, the love and glory of his youth; the delight, the pride, and sometimes the torment of his life, but always the perpetual anxiety of his soul.

Murat's letter to his wife and children.

“Pizzo, October 13, 1815.

‘My dear Caroline,—My last hour is arrived! In a few moments I shall have ceased to live; in a few moments you will no longer have a husband. Never forget me! I die innocent. My life has not been stained by any injustice! Farewell my Achille! Farewell my Lætitia! Farewell my Lucien! Farewell my Louise!’ (the names of his children to whom he wished to give this nominal embrace, that it might be felt more personally in the heart of each, accompanied with their names of domestic familiarity), “show yourselves worthy of me to the world! I leave you without a kingdom and without fortune, in the midst of my numerous enemies. Be constantly united! Show yourselves superior to misfortune; think of what you are, and of what you have been, and God will bless you! Do not execrate my memory! Know that my greatest sorrow in the last moments of my life is to die far away from my children. Receive my paternal blessing! Receive my embraces and my tears! Always preserve the memory of your unfortunate father:’

LI.

This letter solely dictated by nature, on the point of eternal separation, within three paces of the tribunal about to pass sentence, and of the soldiers who were loading their muskets to shatter that breast, and to stop for ever the palpitations of that heart, betokened still more than a whole life could do, the genius of Murat's soul—good-heartedness! He knew how to fight and he knew how to love. He was better than a king, he was more than a hero, he was a man. This last cry of his testified, unknown to him, more for his memory than all the declamation and all the posthumous manifestos of his model at St. Helena could subsequently effect for that of Napoleon. The one addressed his adieux to the world, the other to his wife and children; the one died upon the stage, the other amidst his family. The death of Murat was superior to that of Napoleon, as nature is superior to pride; Murat's farewell letter

His interview with Starace.

will draw tears from the remotest posterity. If in him we do not recognise the victim and the martyr, at least we feel the lover, the father, and the hero. He died a faithful witness of himself. Volatile and fiery, he had experienced the intoxication of fortune, and the errors of policy; but he never had the perversity of ambition, nor the cruelty of supreme power. His reign had been generous and gentle as his heart.

After having bedewed this paper with his tears, and pressed it with his lips as often as he had kisses to send thus to his wife and his four children, he asked for a pair of scissors, cut off one of the ringlets of his long hair, kissed it also, that his family might find upon it the impression of his lips, and enclosing the humid hair in the letter, he gave it, with the most earnest recommendations to Nunziante.

LII.

Captain Starace, who had been recommended to him for his official defender, entered his room, disguising badly an emotion which revealed itself in his tears. He conjured Murat to be allowed to defend him before the military commission; but Murat, resuming the martial attitude and language of his kingly character, "No!" he said to Starace, "these are my subjects, and not my judges. Kings are not amenable to their subjects, not even to other kings, for thrones make all kings equal with each other! Would they try me by any other title? As a marshal of France? The court must then be formed of marshals. As a general? The court must be composed of generals. Before they compel me to recognise a tribunal such as that they would impose upon me, many pages must be torn from the history of Europe! You cannot save my life! They who are going to pronounce upon my fate are not my judges, but my executioners. The honour of royalty shall at least be preserved in me." Starace was compelled to yield to the inflexible will of his client.

The Judge-advocate having entered to interrogate the accused; "You shall have but one reply from me," said he: "I am Joachim Napoleon, King of the Two Sicilies! Begone!"

His review of his career.

Delivered from the cares of his defence, and from the presence of his judges, who were deliberating on the other side of the wall, and drawing out his sentence, he conversed, with an unshaken freedom of mind, with the officers appointed to guard him, who were standing at the door of his chamber. "I should have thought," he said disdainfully, "King Ferdinand a greater man. If fate had put him in my place, and me in his, and if he had landed in my provinces, I should not have abused the fate of arms by sacrificing him!" Then retracing in thought the course of his career, he spoke with satisfaction of the gentleness and prosperity of his reign at Naples, of the pardons he had granted, of the blood he had spared, of the improvements of every description with which he had exerted himself to endow the kingdom; of the army, of the glory he had shed upon it, by associating it with the glory of the French army; of the personal sacrifices which he had made of the treasure he had brought from Germany, for the embellishment of his capital, and of the absolute destitution of fortune in which he was leaving his family after him.

"This is my glory, this is my consolation in my last moments," said he: "I swear that I have done all the good that was in my power to the country, and never did evil except to the wicked. At Pizzo, however, they hate me, and rejoice at my misfortune! What have I done to be hated?" Then looking back still farther to seek for the cause of the people's dislike of him, and recollecting the murder of the Duke d'Enghien, of which he had been so unjustly accused of being the accomplice. "Is it the tragedy of the Duke d'Enghien," he said, as if with a sudden impulse, "which Ferdinand is now avenging upon me by a similar tragedy? I here swear by that God in whose presence I shall stand in another moment, that I took no part whatever in that murder."

He finally requested to be left alone for some moments to resign himself and to fortify his soul, for his language to his guardians, as well as his letter to his children, proves that the thoughts of God were present to his mind at his departure from the earth.

A priest of Pizzo who had been offered to him, and whom

His last moments.

he had accepted to console and sanctify his death, was shut up with him in his chamber. "Sire," said the priest, addressing him with respect and pity, "this is not the first time that I have appeared before your majesty. When you came about five years ago to Pizzo, while visiting your provinces, I implored some assistance from your majesty for the necessities of this church; and you gave me a generous donation. My voice which had then sufficient power over your heart to inspire you with an act of benevolence shall now be for you a souvenir of mercy. May this souvenir of happy augury induce you this day to accept those prayers which have no other object than the eternal repose of your soul!"

Murat performed the service for the dying, and, at the request of the priest, gave him, to ensure his interment in consecrated ground, these words written and signed with his own hand, "I declare that I die a good christian." He charged the priest to give his watch, which had now no more hours to mark for him here below, to his faithful servant, Armand. He desired to say farewell to Generals Natali and Franceschetti, and to the poor soldiers who had been drawn into his misfortunes. This, however, was refused, not from cruelty, but from commiseration, to spare his heart from another bitter trial.

LIII.

During these rapid preparations for the closing scene, the tribunal which was sitting at his door condemned him to death, as the instigator of an insurrection against the kingdom, in virtue of a law which he had promulgated himself ten years before, to intimidate the revolted Calabrians; but which he had never executed by capital punishment, from the indulgent mercy of his disposition. His sentence was read to him with due solemnity. He listened to it as he would have listened to the cannon of another battle during his military life, equally without emotion or bravado. He neither asked for pardon, for delay, or for appeal. He thanked General Nunziante, the officers, and the priest for the consideration and sensibility for his fate which

His death.

they had evinced towards him during his short captivity within those walls.

He advanced of his own accord towards the door, as if to accelerate the catastrophe. This door opened on a narrow esplanade lying between the towers of the castle and the outer walls, very much resembling the castle of Vincennes. But one last and splendid sun, at least, beamed upon the last step and the last look of the hero. Twelve soldiers with loaded muskets awaited him there. The narrow space did not permit them to stand at a sufficient distance to deprive death of a part of its horror. Murat, on stepping over the threshold of his chamber, found himself face to face with them. He refused to let his eyes be bandaged, and looking at the soldiers with a firm and benevolent smile; "My friends," said he, "do not make me suffer by taking a bad aim. The narrow space naturally compels you almost to rest the muzzles of your muskets on my breast, do not tremble, do not strike me in the face, aim at the heart, here it is."

As he spoke thus he placed his right hand upon his coat, to indicate the position of the heart. In his left hand he held a small medallion which contained, in one focus of love, the image of his wife and of his four children, as if he thus wished to make them witnesses of his last hour, or to have their image in his last look, as in his last thought. He fixed his eyes on this portrait, and received the death blow without feeling it, absorbed in the contemplation of all he loved upon earth! His body, pierced at so short a distance by twelve balls, fell with the arms open and the face to the earth, as if still embracing the kingdom which he had once possessed, and which he had come to reconquer for his tomb. They threw his cloak upon the body, which was buried in the cathedral of Pizzo, where he had previously purchased by his donations the hospitality of a final resting place.

His companions in misfortune were pardoned, released, and restored to their country. The people who had insulted him alive, wept at his death. No one could hate him but in battle. He had felt pity, and it was shed freely on his tomb.

Review of his life.

• LIV.

Thus ended the most chivalrous soldier of the Imperial epoch; not the greatest but the most heroic figure amongst the companions of the new Alexander. Sprung from the Pyrenean mountains, a soldier in search of adventures, distinguished in the army by his bravery, offered to the notice of the First Consul by chance, become dear and useful to him by zeal and friendship, elevated to the hand of Bonaparte's sister by her beauty and his love, raised to great commands by the favour, and to the throne by the interest of the family, driven to infidelity by the ambition of his wife and by a father's weakness for his children, dethroned by the reaction on the fall of the empire, disgraced at the same time by Napoleon and by his enemies, unfitted for obscurity and mediocrity after so much splendour and so much fortune, throwing himself in despair upon impossibilities and by imprudence upon death, but falling, while still young, with all his fame, carrying with him if not the entire esteem, at least all the interest and all the compassion of his contemporaries, leaving to posterity one of those names which will eternally dazzle future ages, in which some shades may doubtless be discovered, but no crimes! Such was Murat! Two countries will lay claim to him, France which he served, and Italy which he governed. But he belongs above all to the world of imagination and poetry; a man of romance from his adventures, a man of chivalry from his character, a man of history from his epoch. He merited more than any other of the martial and political men of his period, the epitaph rarely merited by those who serve, or govern courts—a *man of heart*, in all the grandeur, and in all the sensibility of the word. Thus history which will have its enthusiasm and its reproaches, will have, above all, tears for Murat.

• LV.

If his death was not a crime it was at least, a baseness of heart in his murderers. They had the right in an extreme

Judgment on his murderers

point of view, to kill him, but they had not the necessity. Being masters of his person, having no longer to fear from a captive enemy any of those enterprises and competitions which disturb an empire or make a dynasty tremble, there was more vengeance than prudence in his death. This execution tarnished the reign of Ferdinand, without securing it. Greatness of soul, that justice of victory, was wanting to the Sicilian court, where the tragical traditions of Conradin, of Queen Joan, of Machiavelli's Italy had left sinister examples of deadly struggles and scaffolds amongst pretenders to the throne. In sacrificing a hero, who had no ancestors before him, nor dynasty after him, to claim not a right, but an adventure for his throne, the court of Sicily did not elevate its glory, but degraded its character. This execution of a disarmed competitor looked like fear. Envy also appeared to inspire it. It was not so much the rivalry of rights, as the superiority of fame, which obscured in Murat the house of Naples. His competition was less feared than the popularity of his exploits. In beating down the hero they wished to beat down his memory. They only succeeded in imparting to the drama of his life the pathos and the pity which attach themselves to the sanguinary catastrophes of great men. His death recalled that of Pompey. The house of Naples only conquered by that death an additional stain of blood upon its annals, and a mutilated corpse upon its shore. Woe to cowards! Cruelty never exists but where there is lack of courage.

BOOK THIRTY-SECOND.

Character of the French nation—Causes of the spirit of the elections of 1815—Fall of Fouché—His exile in Germany—Review of his life—Fall of M. de Talleyrand—Formation of M. de Richelieu's ministry—Retrospective glance at M. de Richelieu—His life in Russia—His character—Negociations with the Allies—Their exactions—Treaty of the 20th November—Letter of M. de Richelieu—Treaty of the Holy Alliance—Opening of the chambers—The King's speech—M. Lainé, President of the Chamber of Deputies—His speech—Addresses of the two chambers to the King—Policy of the Duke de Richelieu—Spirit of the Council—Laws against seditious cries and individual liberty—Law of the prevotal courts*—Discussion and vote in the two chambers—Proposition of the Duke de Fitz-James—Speech of the Count d'Artois—Return of the Duke d'Orleans—His interview with Louis XVIII.

I.

Nations are like men; they have the same passions, vicissitudes, exaggerations, indecisions, and uncertainties. That which is called public opinion in free governments is only the moveable needle of the dial plate which marks by turns the variations in this atmosphere of human affairs. This instability is still more sudden and prodigious in France than in the other nations of the world, if we except the ancient Athenian race. It has become the proverb of Europe.

The French historian ought to acknowledge this vice of the nation, whose vicissitudes he recounts, as he ought to point out its virtues. Even this instability belongs to a quality of the great French race—imagination; it forms part of its destiny. In its wars it is called impulse; in its arts, genius; in its reverses, despondency; in its despondency, inconsistency; and in its patriotism, enthusiasm. It is the modern nation which

* Cours prévôtales. The name given to criminal tribunals established temporarily and judging without appeal.—TRANSLATOR.

Character of the French nation.

has the most fire in its soul; and this fire is fanned by the wind of its mobility. We cannot explain, except by this character of the French race, those frenzies—which simultaneously seem to seize upon the whole nation after the lapse of some months—for principles, for men, and for governments the most opposed to each other

We are on the eve of one of those astonishing inconstancies of public opinion in France. Let us explain its causes.

* II.

The gleam of those philosophical principles, the whole of which constitute what is called the revolution had nowhere, so much as in France, dazzled and warmed the souls of the people, at the end of the last century. At the voice of her writers, her orators, her tribunes, and her warriors, France took the initiative in the work of reformation, without considering what it would cost in fatigues, treasure, and blood, to renew her institutions, vitiated by the rust of ages, in religion, legislation, civilization, and government. An immense popularity attached itself at the commencement to the men who had courageously sapped the old edifice of her church, her throne, and her laws. Her King himself, imbued through his court, even upon his throne, with this unanimous spirit of renovation, had generously declared himself the first innovator of his kingdom. He had begun the reformation by that of his court, and the sacrifices by those of his authority. The nobility had been equally generous in renouncing its caste, feudalities, titles, and monopolies to mingle itself with the nation. The church alone, a state within the state, a principle calling itself immutable even in temporalities, in the midst of an improvable civilization, had shut itself up in the inflexibility of bodies without hereditary right, without family, and consequently without responsibility in the nation. It had conceded none of its temporal privileges but those which had been wrested from it. Civil war had broken out at its voice in the provinces, over which it maintained the greatest ascendancy. It had excommunicated modern reason, liberty, and equality. It had agitated

Retrospect of France under the Revolution.

those consciences rashly attacked by the constituent assembly in the civil constitution of the clergy, a constitution which should only touch the temporal establishment, and not the free hierarchy of the priesthood. It had fanaticised the peasantry, and the peasantry had led away their nobles, in spite of themselves, in those extremities of the kingdom.

III.

The remainder of the nation, little enlightened, had made the King, the clergy, and the nobility, responsible for those seditions of the past against the present. The anger and the suspicions of the people had risen to their culminating point; persecution had urged to emigration, emigration to fury, to the spoliation of families, and to the national war against Europe. The throne had crumbled amidst the tumult, pulled down like a counter-revolutionary flag raised in the midst of the revolution. Ungovernable demagogues had thrown to the people the heads of the King, of the queen, of her family, of the nobility, and of the citizens, to feed their popularity with blood; and they had in turn perished themselves by the hands of their rivals. France inundated with the blood of her citizens during eighteen months, had been the dread of the world and of itself. Ideas were confounded with each other; the conflict of events, of foreign wars, of civil wars, of men, and of affairs in general, had so intermingled all flags, that no one could any longer recognise either his friends or his enemies. The revolution was drowned in the anarchy.

The country, however, was beginning to know itself, to purify itself, to constitute itself into a tolerant democracy under the republican government of the directory, when Bonaparte, personifying at once in himself the usurpation of the army over the laws and the counter-revolution, violently interrupted on the 18th Brumaire, the silent work of the new civilization, which was elaborating and culling out the elements of the new order of things. To divert the nation's thoughts from its revolution he launched it and led it on to the conquest of Europe. He exhausted it of its blood and population, to prevent it from

Public opinion after the discomfiture of Napoleon.

thinking and agitating under him. He had made it apostacize by his publicists, by his silent system, and by his police, from all the principles of its regeneration of 1789. While he was hurling Kings from their thrones, he declared himself the avenger and restorer of priesthoods and royalties.

IV.

France had begun to breathe after his first fall in 1814. The charter had resumed the work of Louis XVI., and promulgated the principles of the constituent assembly. The revolution had gone back to its first glorious days. It had no longer to apprehend either the intoxication of illusions, or the resistance of the church, of the court, of the nobility, or the crimes of the demagogues.

The second return of Bonaparte, thanks to the complicity of the army, had a second time interrupted this era of renovation, of peace, and of hope. This violence to the nation and to Europe had been punished by a second invasion, which humbled, ruined, and decimated France; and even threatened to partition it into fragments. Bonaparte in quitting his army after his defeat at Waterloo, and in abdicating, had carried away with him the responsibility of this disaster; but he had left behind him the resentment of the nation against the army, against his party, his accomplices, and against his name. This great calamity must necessarily fall upon something; and it fell accordingly, like an imprecation, almost unanimous, on Bonapartism. Royalists—liberals—landed proprietors—merchants—farmers—artisans—remnants of the assemblies of '89—remains of the nobility and clergy—royalists of La Vendée, of the south, and of the north—constitutionalists or republicans of the east and the centre of France—the citizens of towns, whose 20,000 families had each a son, a nephew, or a brother in the military household of the King—sea-ports, whose vessels, shipping, and products had been imprisoned for twenty years by the continental war—rural families, who each deplored the loss of one, two, and sometimes three children sacrificed; in Spain or in Russia, to the ambition of a conqueror—towns and

Causes of the spirit of the elections of 1815.

villages occupied by the Russians, the Prussians, or the English, ruined by requisitions and imposts—everybody in short had a grievance, a resentment, a mourning, or a ruin to avenge upon this name of one man. The paroxysm of anger compressed by the presence of the army, by dread of the imperial police, and by the hope of a repetition of that glory with which he had for a moment fascinated France before Waterloo, burst forth from every heart, except those of his soldiers, immediately after his fall.

Public opinion threw itself, without reflection, without foresight, and without discretion into the opposite party in the elections. Neither the caution recommended by M. de Talleyrand to the King's commissioners appointed to preside over and direct the electoral colleges, nor the partiality of Fouché's agents, in favouring, as much as possible, the republican candidates, to intimidate the court and the King, and to preserve an equilibrium, were availing. Public opinion in France, when irritated, listens neither to middle courses, nor to intrigues, nor to prudence; it goes direct from one side to the other, like the ocean in its ebb and flow. This is the whole explanation of the elections of 1815, which sent up to the crown a Chamber more counter-revolutionary than all Europe, and more royalist than the King.

It astonished this prince himself by the unanimity and excess of its anger against the revolution, by its animosity against the Empire, and by its enthusiasm for the Bourbons. He felt that he would have more difficulty in restraining than in exciting such a passion for his family. He even feared that this enthusiasm would consider him too lukewarm in his own cause, and that it would reproach him for the humiliating concession he had made in placing M. de Talleyrand, but above all a regicide, in his council, and that it might make the Count d'Artois, his brother, the ruler and perhaps the master of the reign. He resolved, therefore, to forestal those exactions which the names comprised in such a representation led him to anticipate, and to dismiss his minister himself, before the opening of the Chambers.

The King decides on dismissing Fouché.

V.

He experienced, however, a secret embarrassment in dismissing M. de Talleyrand, who had held out such a protecting hand to him in 1814, and whose ascendancy over the peerage, and understanding with the foreign courts, appeared to him to call for some caution and prudence. It was with secret joy, though mixed with some bitterness for himself, that he saw him become unpopular in Paris by his carelessness, and his failing in the negotiation of the conditions of peace, by the inflexibility of Austria and Prussia. He felt a pleasure in being able to attribute to the inability of this great diplomatist the humiliating *ultimatum* of the allied powers, which M. de Talleyrand was pliant enough to accept, and which he, the King, was patriot enough to reject. He wished first to avail himself further of the hand of M. de Talleyrand, to dismiss Fouché from his councils. The league of the simultaneous discontents of these two statesmen seemed to him dangerous to his safety. It was necessary therefore to divide before he got rid of them. He thought he should still have occasion for M. de Talleyrand for a short time ; but he could at once dispence with Fouché. The zeal and activity of his new favourite, M. Decazes, who daily advanced farther in his confidence, reassured him against the conspiracies of the Bonapartists. M. Decazes profiting by the indolence of Fouché—who was inexpert in detail—and by his private audiences with the King, had possessed himself insensibly of all the springs of the police. He left to Fouché only the name of minister, and the high intrigues in which he took a pleasure in playing the part of a man essential to all parties. Already the King said in speaking of his young confident, "I shall raise him so high that he will excite the envy of the greatest houses of France!" Pride and friendship mingle together in the hearts of Kings.

VI

The King, at a glance, saw through these transparent intrigues of Fouché, who had continued since his majesty's return the double part he had played during the hundred days. He alarmed the King and the Council of Ministers with imaginary plots and exaggerated perils. He spread about, himself under the form of official notices, sinister rumours, in order to propagate agitation by the very means he pretended he was taking to allay it.

He wrote several reports to the King, similar to those which he had drawn up for the Emperor after the 20th March; these he secretly delivered to his agents, and had them circulated underhand amongst the people, as documents purloined from the indiscreet confidence of his cabinet.

"Sire," said the cunning minister, "the energetic men who have overturned Bonaparte have only sought to put a period to tyranny. An opposition of the same nature agitates and divides all classes. It has its focus in the most ardent passions, and in the dread of seeing the old opinions triumph. We must not look at Paris, for there factitious opinions assume the aspect of the real."

He wished thus to efface from the mind of the King the evidences of adoration and of joy, scenes of which were incessantly before his eyes, in the gardens of the Tuileries and on the boulevards, an intoxication of loyalty throughout.

"The towns," he added, "are opposed to the country, even in the west, where you are flattered with the hope of finding soldiers. The purchasers of national domains will there resist whoever may attempt to dispossess them. The loyalty of the south finds vent in illegal proceedings. Armed bands scour the country, and penetrate into the towns. Pillage and assassination daily multiply. In the east the horror of the invasion, and the faults of preceding ministers, have alienated the population. In the majority of the departments a few handfuls of royalists would only be found

Fouché's reports to the King.

to oppose the mass of the people. Repose will be difficult to the army; unlimited ambition has made it adventurous.

"There are two great factions in the state; the one defends principles, the other marches to a counter-revolution. On one side the clergy, the nobility, the old possessors of national domains now sold, the members of the old parliaments, obstinate men who cannot believe that their antiquated ideas are at fault, and who cannot pardon a revolution they have cursed, and others, who being weary of agitation look for repose in the old regime, with some impassioned writers, flatterers of triumphant opinions. On the opposite side, nearly the whole of France, the constitutionalists, the republicans, the army, the people, every class of the discontented, a multitude of Frenchmen even attached to the King, but who are convinced that an attempt at, or even a tendency towards the old regime, would be the signal for an explosion similar to that of 1789."

VII

Manuel, that orator of the last assembly, who was now more closely than ever allied to Fouché, and seeking to attach himself to the minister, drew up these reports with him, in which some truths were mingled with intentional exaggerations. Manuel and Fouché, while writing these threatening statistics to the King, forgot, or pretended to forget, those innumerable masses, who fluctuate between matured opinions, and who rush to the side where they behold fortune, peace, and security. They were all at this moment for the King; this was sufficiently attested by the elections. But Fouché wished to alarm, that he might afterwards reassure, in answering for all by his personal ability.

The King and his council began to be offended with these sinister pictures, and above all with the culpable publicity given to them by the minister of police. This publicity was too like treachery to be tolerated without umbrage by the King. "Does the minister of police then," said M. de Talleyrand at length one day, before his colleague, and in the presence of

His unpopularity at court.

the King, "pretend to rule us by his popularity?" Fouché excused himself by some pretended involuntary revelations of his manuscripts to the public; but they were accustomed to disbelieve his assertions, and the irritation against him increased. The Duke and Duchess of Angoulême, on returning from the southern provinces, whither they had gone to enjoy the royalist enthusiasm, and who returned to the Tuileries with the conviction of an impassioned popularity for their cause, declared again to the King that they never would meet in his palace the judge of Louis XVI. Every time that Fouché appeared in the apartments of the palace, they became deserted immediately. The moderate men did not dissemble their repugnance, nor the royalists their antipathy. He alone, blinded by the prodigious success of his boldness and his stratagems during the late events, and sure of the support of the Duke of Wellington, thought himself still certain of ruling all. He thought he could intimidate the assembly by the King, the King by the revolutionists and Bonapartists, the allied powers by the irritated patriotism of the country, and the country by the allied powers. He was confident as success could make him. He himself forgot his past life, believing that he could thus make others forget it. The man of the convention, and the man of the court of Louis XVIII., were, in his opinion, two individuals who had no longer anything in common, not even the name. His title of Duke of Otranto, covered the memory of the old Fouché. He repudiated the revolution as an importunate souvenir of his youth. "When we are young," he said carelessly to his confidants, "we are pleased with revolutions; they move and agitate us; they are a spectacle which we like to witness, and to mingle in; but at my age they have fewer charms, and then we like repose, order, stability, and to enjoy ourselves." Power seemed to him one of those enjoyments necessary to his mature age, as agitation had been necessary to his youth.

VIII.

Nothing was wanting to the external dignity of his life but a family to inherit his immense fortune and titles, and an

Fouché's worldly position and marriage.

alliance with one of the families of the high French aristocracy, to legitimate his new nobility by the ancient nobility of the court and of Paris. He was still thought to be so powerful, so inviolable from disgrace; his riches, his influence on the late events, his decisive intervention in the fall of Bonaparte, and in the re-establishment of the Bourbons, exercised such a spell upon that nobility accustomed to grant everything to the favour of courts, that he was almost certain, in spite of his name and his blemishes, to engraft himself upon the stock of some illustrious family by a union. That heart agitated, but not filled by ambition and the satiety of fortune, had not been insensible to the seductions of youth and beauty. He had known at Aix, during his mission to the south at the termination of the empire, Mademoiselle de Castellane, the young daughter of a distinguished house of Provence, endowed with charms calculated to captivate the heart and the eyes. He had preserved for her a tender recollection and a serious admiration. This young lady herself, in spite of the disproportion of name, age, and manner of life, had been touched by the respectful homage of a powerful, clever, and celebrated man, whose titles, advancement, and services rendered to the royal cause had blotted out the past. Fouché demanded her in marriage, and obtained her from her family. He was then so high in public favour, and in the apparent confidence of the King, that the aristocracy of Paris dared hardly murmur against the complaisance of a great race which consented to mingle its name with that of the old proconsul of the reign of terror. He gave immense splendour to his marriage fête, as if to bid defiance to all murmurs. He thought he had opened to himself for ever the doors of that nobility of which he only possessed the title and riches. This was the zenith of his happiness. It was not long before he was precipitated from it.

IX

A few days after the elections, the significance of which though still obscure, struck the ministry however with inquietude; M. de Talleyrand, who wished to merit the favour of

M. de Talleyrand broaches the dismissal of Fouché in the council.

the court by delivering it from a humiliation, insinuated indirectly to Fouché, at the council of ministers, the propriety or the necessity of a retirement. He spoke carelessly of America, where he had himself passed the sweetest years of his exile during the reign of terror. He boasted the freedom and safety of a residence which by separating a man from a stormy continent, such as that of Europe, separated him from his enemies and his dangers. He said that no existence upon earth had ever appeared to him superior to that of an Ambassador, the representative of France, in a country which owed everything to France. Then turning affectedly towards Fouché, as if he had wished to draw from the mouth of his colleague an acquiescence in such a degree of happiness, which he might have taken for a wish to enjoy it; "this existence," he added, "I can offer at this moment, the post of King's minister to the United States being vacant. Would you not be tempted by the dignity and the security of this asylum?" Fouché who who had been prevented by astonishment from understanding him at first, at length comprehended the matter fully, became confused, and demanded, without however, receiving any answer, if his services were disagreeable to the King, and if his Majesty wished to get rid of him?"

After this the court might explain itself farther, and dismiss him without danger. The elections threatened him from hatred to his name, the royalists blushed for having made use of him for a day. The King felt humbled, the court was ungrateful, the ministers were jealous, M. de Talleyrand happy at casting an old rival upon the waves, the republicans indifferent, the Bonapartists implacable. The soil itself seemed at last to crumble under him. The man who had proscribed to please others, was proscribed himself a few days after, by those to whom he had sacrificed his accomplices. He was about to meet them as a living remorse upon a foreign soil.

X.

This proscription was however adorned with the appearance of a foreign mission. Fouché who had refused the embassy to

Fouché's dismissal and exile to Austria.

the United States, not to place too great a distance between his exile and a return to greatness, which he did not cease to hope for, accepted the title of minister at the little court of Saxony. The King thus gave a colouring to his ingratitude, Fouché to his impotence. His fortune opened the whole world to him, and he could retire independent anywhere. But this exile required the shadow of a court, of importance, and of public affairs. He was so completely abandoned and so threatened in France, the day after he had ceased to be all-powerful there, that he made his preparations for departure in silence, and travelled through France under a false name, and in disguise, to evade the insults of some, the vengeance of others, the disdain of all.

A few months after his arrival at Dresden he was recalled, and interdicted from returning to France. He was exiled to Austria, and lived at Lintz, consoled by the tenderness and virtues of his young wife. He frequently solicited from M. Decazes, and from Prince Metternich an exile somewhat nearer to France, or a residence in a capital, such as Vienna. We have before us his correspondence during these years of distant solitude; they sometimes breathe resignation, and sometimes indignation against fate and the insults of his enemies.

"We are in a rich and beautiful country, and in a handsome town," said he, "but without resources of society and information. Throughout the Austrian dominions Vienna alone possesses any intelligence, but that is the residence of the son of Napoleon. Would it be inconvenient to place me in Bavaria, in Belgium, or in England? It is very certain that I should give no assistance to the parties which divide you. In approaching France I should sometimes have the advantage of seeing my friends. I have signed the ordinance of proscription; it was—and it was considered at that time to be—the only means of saving the party which accuses me now. It removed it from the fury of the royalists, and sheltered it in exile. I do not wish that parties should be crushed in France; but I form ardent wishes that they may be restrained. Let the revolutionists be reduced to a reasonable opposition; let not the King be separated from the nation, by making it look upon

Fouché's death, and review of his character.

him as an adversary. You are too much on your guard against the ultra royalists, but not enough against the other party. Read the history of Poland again; you are threatened with the same fate, if you do not master your passions. I am reading a history of the campaign of 1815, by General Gourmand. I am not astonished at the language his master makes use of with reference to me: it is convenient for Napoleon to excuse all his follies by maintaining that he has been betrayed. No, there were no traitors but his flatterers."

Fouché died during his exile, insulted, or forgotten by all parties, incapable of repose, exhausted by idleness and inactivity, not satiated with enacting a part, seeking to repel the echo, sometimes true, sometimes calumnious, of his life, which pursued him in his retreat: a man of storms, who, like the bird of the sea, could not live on a peaceful shore.

XI.

He left behind him an ambiguous memory, but great as the varied part he had played in the events of his country. Possessing the genius more of an embroiler than an evil-doer, but still the genius of intrigue, pursuing his course through such varied revolutions; a terrorist in attitude and language, more than in heart and hand, under the convention; suspected by Robespierre, threatened some days before the triumph of moderation, one of the first to disown the revolution when it was declining, and offering himself to Bonaparte as a necessary negociator between him and Jacobinism; availing himself of his power under the empire to make friends by indulgence both of royalists and republicans, seeking to moderate the despotism of Napoleon, to prolong it for his own profit, abandoning him when he declined to obtain pardon from the Bourbons, dismissing them with one hand, and bringing them back with the other, after the return from the Isle of Elba, with a boldness and a duplicity which perhaps were never equalled; not betraying Napoleon, but allowing him to be betrayed by his genius and by events; preparing himself to dismiss him from the scene and to prevent him from a third time setting

Causes of the King's dislike to M. de Talleyrand.

France in a flame, ruling at that moment by his intervention one of the boldest and most complicated transitions in history ; saving his country from great calamities, Europe from rivers of blood, and perhaps France from dismemberment ; triumphing for two days, and forcing the court of the Bourbons to implore the assisting hand of a regicide ; a dupe subsequently to his own cleverness, and engulfed in his triumph by the rage of the royalists whom he had served. Such was Fouché. If something sinister had not attached itself to his name, with the votes of the blood of the convention, his would be one of the great parts, by turns serious and comic, which the statesman would study with the greatest satisfaction, if he had for his object success and not principles. A consummate actor under the two aspects of the man of boldness and the man of stratagem ; he wanted nothing in ability, little in good sense, everything in virtue. This is his definition, but it is also his sentence. He will be always looked upon, sometimes admired, never esteemed.

XII

We will now return to the day after his fall. The King was only half delivered by Fouché's disgrace. M. de Talleyrand, and the rest of the ministry, still remained, and persisted in facing the Chamber, thinking it would be appeased by the sacrifice of the minister of police. But M. de Talleyrand weighed perhaps more heavily upon the King than Fouché himself. The King in Fouché only hated the revolutionist, but in M. de Talleyrand he hated the patron. The pride of the man of high birth, and the superiority of the man of understanding, consummate in public affairs, were apparent in the tone and attitude of M. de Talleyrand before the King. Though pliant with the powerful, this minister had too lively a recollection of his name, of his dignities of the Empire, of his favour with the allied sovereigns, and of his reputation as a statesman, in the King's presence. He looked upon this prince as a foreign guest of the nation, new to affairs of the state, passive in his own Council, whom he had led by the hand into the palace, to whom he was doing the honours of France, and

The King resolves on changing his ministry.

who could not without him make himself acquainted with the manners, the affairs and the men of the new age.

Louis XVIII. had submitted for some time to this political subordination in affairs, from the necessity which had imposed M. de Talleyrand upon him; but his dignity and understanding felt itself wounded. He had confided to M. Decazes the discontent he felt with his ministry, the wish he had to substitute another, and the preliminary and confidential negotiations, the necessary preludes to this change of administration. His conferences with M. Lainé, and with other members of the Chamber who had arrived in Paris, the slow and unsuccessful nature of the negotiations with the allied powers for a general peace, the murmurs of the court of the Count d'Artois against this ministry, which it called at once idle, proud, and unfortunate, had secretly decided the King. But an opportunity and a pretext were wanting to break with becoming decency the connection with the ministry of M. de Talleyrand, which had been formed from necessity. M. de Talleyrand intoxicated by two years of importance, and thinking himself inviolable, had the imprudence to offer to the King himself the hour and the manner of his own disgrace.

XIII.

The royalist journals, and the saloons of the aristocracy, incited by the impassioned movement of public opinion which had been evinced in the elections, were incessantly threatening the minister with the anger of the chambers for the cowardly, or culpable lenity he was showing to the revolution and the revolutionists. These rumours, the prelude of sharp struggles with the chambers, alarmed M. de Talleyrand. He did not feel himself strong enough to quell an assembly by his eloquence; he wished therefore, to intimidate it by the authority of the King. It was necessary for this purpose to compromise the King in the cause of the ministers, and to establish between them and him an apparent joint responsibility, capable of imposing upon the royalists.

M. de Talleyrand imparted this plan to his colleagues, and

M. de Talleyrand's proposal to the King.

easily drew these weak and frivolous men into this giddy act of audacity. He called upon the King in full council, to give the lie to the rumours which were afloat of his estrangement from his ministry, by granting to himself and his colleagues some striking proof to the contrary, which would discourage the budding opposition in the chambers, and impose silence upon the cabal of the Count d'Artois in the palace. He even went so far, it is said, as to hint to the King the retirement of the Count d'Artois from Paris, as a government necessity, which would remove a centre and a support from the opposers of his policy. He added that if the King did not exhibit for his ministry, the firmest and most personal adhesion, the ministers, weakened in public opinion, would not consider themselves in a position to meet the chambers, and that they would consequently be obliged to retire.

XIV

In speaking thus boldly, M. de Talleyrand did not doubt that the King, constrained by the necessity of continuing his confidence to the man who was at that moment treating for his kingdom with the allied powers, and for his popularity with the revolutionary party, would yield to his demand; and give renewed vigour to royal authority in his hands. But like Fouché, M. de Talleyrand could no longer read the hearts of Kings, or of nations; he still assumed the position of an essential man, though he had no longer any foundation either in events, or in public opinion. The King whom he had ruled, now ruled him in turn, with all the loftiness of the throne above the revolution.

The King felt his strength, and he looked upon the circumstance as a relief to his embarrassment in dismissing his ministers. After having listened with an appearance of impassibility while ruminating on the language, so respectfully insolent, of M. de Talleyrand:

"It is their resignation, then," he said, with the accent of an offended man; "that my ministers have given me! Very well! I shall nominate others." Then with a motion of the

His dismissal and review of his career.

head, without waiting for replies, penitence, or explanation, he dismissed them. "You may remain in France," said the King to M. de Talleyrand, as if desirous of reminding his minister of the exile imposed upon Fouché, and of the banishments far from the court to which the ancient monarchy condemned its too powerful ministers. "I hope," replied M. de Talleyrand, with a degree of hardy bitterness, which he would not have ventured, under similar circumstances, before Napoleon when irritated, "I hope I have occasion for nothing more than the justice of the King, to live without apprehension in my country." He then retired.

"The King has made fools of us," he said to his colleagues on going out of the royal cabinet, astonished at his baffled stratagem. He had seen, in the eagerness of his majesty to take him at his word, a foregone conclusion, and he had recognised in his words, the accent of the master and not of the protégé. Subduing his anger, however, to his interest, and wishing to keep open for the future the doors of a palace, the inconstancies of which he well knew, he solicited, at first as a reparation, and afterwards as a favour, the place of grand chamberlain, with a salary of 100,000 francs; a favour which was granted more to the circumstances than to the man; for though the court still tolerated, it no longer feared him.

XV.

The ministry of M. de Talleyrand, of 1815 had been passive, powerless, and unfortunate. This statesman, whose principal talent was to let everything be done by the natural course of human affairs, taking to himself the merit when this occult power had served him well, had been badly served on this occasion by circumstances, and he had been unable either to correct or to combat them. A nullity at home, and played with by Russia and Prussia abroad, not able to treat on acceptable conditions with the allied powers, to direct the elections which had passed like a returning tide over his head, to rule the court, to face the deputies, or to shield from the indignation of the country, the remains of the revolutionary party com-

The King offers the Duke of Richelieu the presidency of the Council.

promised in the hundred days, he disappeared without leaving a trace, unregretted by all parties. He had only obtained one success, and that was a scandal. In persuading the King to take Fouché into his council, he had dishonoured the monarchy which he pretended to serve. From this day his political life declined, in spite of all the manœuvres which he did not cease to employ, to regain a popularity which he had himself justly diminished by his incapacity in these great conjunctures. Nor did he regain it in 1830, and he only raised his name then by unworthily disavowing the principle of the hereditary right of thrones, which in 1814 he had made the dogma of the monarchists; and by becoming the accomplice of the overthrow of that principle with the house of Orleans, the last refuge of all his projects of ambition.

XVI.

The King, who had conversed with M. Decazes about the Duke of Richelieu, directed his favourite to see him, and to offer him the presidency of the council of ministers. Independent of the general and merited esteem which directed the King's thoughts towards this nobleman, and the prestige of his name itself, which seemed to connect his cabinet with the memory of one of those statesmen to whom the Bourbon family owed the terror and boundless power of the monarchy, the King had a very just and a very able instinct in placing his government under the auspices of so great a name. The Emperor of Russia had been alienated from M. de Talleyrand at the Congress of Vienna, the year before, by the ill-concealed manœuvres of that diplomatist, who had concluded a secret alliance with Austria, to the exclusion and against the interests of Russia. In thus acting, M. de Talleyrand had followed the mean and cowardly policy of Cardinal Bernis, under Louis XV. In forming this alliance, France only restrained herself. By the secret resentment which the Emperor of Russia had conceived at this duplicity and ingratitude of the cabinet of the Tuileries, he owed everything, even the throne, to him, he was less good to have towards a ministry directed by M. de Talley-

Character of the Duke of Richelieu.

rand than towards any other, that complaisance and generosity which the King had solicited from him to soften the conditions of the conquerors. The exactions against France might be the personal vengeance of that sovereign against M. de Talleyrand ; but a minister who should guarantee to Russia the fidelity and friendship of the government of the Bourbons, would, perhaps, obtain from the Emperor Alexander, the arbiter of Europe, an alleviation of the rigours of fate. M. de Richelieu seemed to be destined by his life for this appeal to the heart of Alexander. He was one of those men predestined by birth, by name, by nature, and even by the chances of their existence, to throw themselves as mediators between conflicting events, and to save their country when everything seems to conspire for its destruction.

XVII

Armand, Duke of Richelieu, grand-nephew, by the female line, of the cardinal, was the grandson of Marshal Richelieu, the French Alcibiades. We must omit from this illustrious genealogy the Duke de Fronsac, his father, the eclipse of one generation in a great race. The genius of government, the genius of war, and the genius of the court seem thus to have been concentrated in this name.

The Duke of Richelieu was at this time forty-nine years of age. When young and impatient for glory, like Lafayette, before 1789, he had gone to seek in the struggle between the Turks and Russians at that period opportunities and lessons in war under the enterprising General Suwarrow. He had been remarked by that hero at the famous assault of Ismail, the Saragossa of Turkey. He had hastened from the frontiers of the Ottoman empire to the army of Condé, to offer his arm and his blood in defence of the Bourbons and of the throne, these two-fold duties of his race. After the dissolution of this brave army, which was repudiated at once by France and by the foreign powers, he had followed his cause in England, where it still had hopes and defenders. He had there commanded, up to 1794, one of those emigrant corps which England held in pay as auxiliaries in civil war, when the continent should

Career of the Duke of Richelieu.

be open to the inactive princes of the house of Bourbon. This inglorious idleness weighed upon the active and noble soul of the Duke of Richelieu. Civil war was repugnant to his patriotism: he had therefore returned to Russia to offer his services to the emperor Paul I. Well received at first, and subsequently disgraced by one of the caprices of this prince, who had a generous heart but a suspicious mind, he had been recalled by the emperor Alexander, immediately on his accession to the throne. Conformity of age and character had connected the young emperor and the illustrious refugee in a friendship more intimate and more solid than the ordinary favour of courts. But Russia being at peace, a wish to see his country again, and the solicitations of Napoleon, who was seeking out illustrious names, to surround himself with every fascination, had recalled the Duke of Richelieu for a moment to Paris. Though respectful towards the First Consul, he did not condescend to disavow, in order to attach himself to his fortune, the traditions of his house, and the attachments of his youth. An explosion of these sentiments in his language having occasioned his exile, his remembrances recalled him to Russia, where the friendship of the Czar awaited him. Alexander, who was then employed in peopling, civilizing, building upon, and arming that fine portion of his vast empire which is bathed by the Black Sea, had made him governor general of the whole of New Russia. He had created, constructed, and aggrandized Odessa, the territorial and maritime capital of the Crimea. He had planned, in ten years of wise and prosperous administration, an empire between the Dneister and the Caucasus. He had nothing to do but to scatter benefits around, and to second the spontaneous growth of people, commerce, and navigation. He had understood nature, and nature assisted him. His name, like that of an ancient founder of a colony, a disseminator of races, magnified by distance, and favoured by circumstances, was consecrated in the East, and renowned in the West. The continental war had brought him back into the camp, into the councils, and into the intimacy of Alexander.

We have seen him in 1814, and during the hundred days,

His personal appearance.

following or representing his sovereign and his friend in Paris, at Vienna, and at Ghent. The subject at once of two princes, Louis XVIII. and Alexander, he was the link that sought to connect them together, for the advantage of both. His character and reputation inspired the King and the French princes with a serious respect for him. The armies and foreign diplomatists considered him as one of those men without reproach, who shine less by their splendour than their purity. The French nobility cited him with pride, the army and the people with esteem. A stranger, from his long absence from France, to all the enmity, all the faults, and all the ambition of parties, he presented to all that aspect of neutrality in passions, and impartiality in thoughts, which is the happy condition of men who have been long absent from their native country, and who return to it as arbitrators, beyond the reproaches and weariness engendered by revolutionary times.

This moral character of the Duke of Richelieu was still further enhanced by all that external grace and nobility which combine the lofty virtues with the highest popularity in a man of conspicuous station. His countenance bespoke his name. His forehead was high, his eyes limpid, his nose aquiline, his lips disclosed. The Grecian oval of his features recalled the beauty of his grandfather in his youth; but his expression had neither the same volatility, boldness, or vanity. It was perceptible that a sad and serious revolution had passed over the natural splendour of the race, and impressed upon it reflection, maturity, and the virtues of long adversity. The prevailing character of his countenance, as of his soul, was modesty. He was a man whom it was always necessary to convince of his own sufficiency, and who could not be induced to accept an honour except by proving to him that it was also a duty.

He was adored by his family. Two sisters whom he had left in France, and who resided in Paris, lived only in his joy and his affection. These were the Countess of and the Marchioness of Montcalm. The latter, connected by feeling and intellect with the literary, aristocratic, and political élite of Paris, had a saloon open to all the talent and celebrities of the day. A graceful and eminent woman,

The Duke of Richelieu accepts the presidency of the Council.

whose mind and countenance recalled her brother, who could only be won by virtues, and who herself only captivated by dignity of mind and nobleness of heart. Her house formed the circle of the Duke of Richelieu's friends; and it comprised the court, the parliament, the army, the city, and the diplomacy of Europe. There was no intriguing there; but all nourished, in friendly intercourse, the loftiest thoughts for the reconciliation of parties, and the independence and dignity of France. M. Lainé was its modest and patriotic oracle. A conformity of nature and love of good, had instinctively attracted together these two men, who only knew each other by name: M. Lainé represented the virtue of citizenship, M. de Richelieu the patriotism of the nobility. Their union combined them both

XVIII.

Great efforts were necessary to vanquish the modesty of the Duke of Richelieu, and to induce him to accept, under such desperate circumstances, a government which had eluded the most consummate hands. M. Decazes, M. Lainé, the King, the Emperor Alexander himself had much difficulty in triumphing over his timidity. Patriotism alone subdued him. It was demonstrated to him that he alone could prevent the dismemberment of France, by obtaining from the friendship of the Emperor Alexander that which no one but himself could hope to accomplish after the failure of M. de Talleyrand. The tears and supplications of his sisters at length softened his resistance. He consented to quit the high and tranquil favour of a sovereign, his friend, to throw himself into the difficulties, the disasters, the intrigues, and the storms of opinion of those internal and external parties who were contending for his country.

The ministry was thus composed:—the Duke of Richelieu, minister of foreign affairs, and president of the council; M. Corvetto, an able Genoese financier, as bold as Jaw, but more prudent, was the finance minister; M. de Vanblanc, new to public affairs, though an old member of the revolutionary assemblies, was minister of the interior—this was the pledge

Constitution of the ministry.

given in the administration to the Count d'Artois, whose confidence he had won at Ghent; Clarke, Duke de Feltres, minister of war; Barbé-Marbois, a man of mixed politics, whose years corresponded with the events of both centuries, minister of justice; M. Dubouchage, an old naval officer, a gentleman of ancient race from Dauphiny, minister of marine. The King had reserved for his negociator and personal confidant M. Decazes, the ministry which appeared to him at such a moment to constitute the entire government, the ministry of police, the study and the government of public opinion.

XIX

The ministry was scarcely constituted when the Duke of Richelieu, acting upon the Emperor Alexander, not any longer by diplomatic notes, but by his heart and his generosity, obtained from that sovereign the decisive intervention which he solicited to reduce to silence the obstinate exactions of secondary and hostile powers. England, which had been well disposed by the Duke of Wellington, whose good sense saw no repose but in the Bourbons, and no monarchy of the Bourbons possible but with the integrity and independence of their kingdom, seconded the Emperor Alexander in the conferences. The conditions of the treaty, unfortunately agreed to beyond the necessity of the case, by the pliancy of M. de Talleyrand, and the impatience of the court for the throne at any price, were, however, modified within limits which a statesman might, without being satisfied, submit to. M. de Richelieu, in despair at not being able to obtain more advantageous conditions, still considered them too unfavourable, and obstinately refused to sign them. The King who saw the Chambers, then about to open, disposed to call him to account for his sterile intervention for the pacification of the country, and who saw on the other side Austria, Prussia, Holland, and the powers of the Rhine, crushing his people under the devastations of 800,000 men, sent for the Duke of Richelieu, one night, by M. Decazes, and bedewing the hand of his prime-minister with tears, implored him for the sacrifice which is dearest to a man of honour

Negotiations with the Allied Powers.

that of his name. The Duke of Richelieu went away, moved and vanquished by this conference with his unhappy master, and signed the treaty. We find in a few lines written by him a moment after to his sister, Madame de Montcalm, to be communicated to M. Lainé and his friends, the cry of sorrow that bursts from the heart of an honest man when forced to humble his country through a spirit of patriotism.

"All is finished! I have put my name, more dead than alive, to this fatal treaty. I had sworn not to do it, I said so to the King; but this unhappy prince with tears conjured me not to abandon him. I could, therefore, no longer hesitate. I have a conviction, however, that nobody could have obtained so much. Expiring under the presence of calamities which overwhelm her, France imperatively demanded a prompt deliverance!"

The opinion of the Duke of Richelieu was correct. The King was wasting with grief and shame; France was calling at any price for a relief from the invasion which war had brought upon its territory; and if not a cessation, at least some regularity in the mode of retaliation. Europe would not have granted to any one but the Duke of Richelieu what it had refused to Louis XVIII.; he was at this moment the interceder for his country. We have seen the map whereon the borders of France were cut up, to assign their fragments to the respective powers who partitioned them amongst each other.

"Preserve this map, which I re-establish for you alone," said the emperor of Russia to his friend: "it will be in future times the proof of your services and of my friendship for France, and the finest title of nobility for your house." His descendants, in fact, still preserve it.

XX.

This treaty left France in possession of its frontiers of 1790, with the exception of some unimportant portions of territory enclosed within other states, and of Savoy, a conquest of the revolution which had been respected by the treaty of 1814. It imposed an indemnity to Europe of 700,000,000 of francs

Their exactions.

for the last war commenced by Napoleon, an armed occupation for five years of 150,000 men, the generalissimo of which was to be nominated by the allied powers, and the fortresses to be delivered up to this garrison of security. This occupation might terminate in three years, if Europe considered France sufficiently pacified to offer it moral guarantees of tranquillity. The prisoners of war were to be given up, and the liquidation of the 700,000,000 indemnity, was to be effected day by day. Besides this war indemnity, France recognised the principle of the indemnities to be assigned after its liquidation to each power for the ravages, the requisitions, or the confiscations that each of these states had sustained, during the last wars, by the occupation of the French armies. France was further burthened with the pay and subsistence of the 150,000 men of the army of occupation, left by the allied powers upon its territory. The national penalty incurred by France for Napoleon's return from Elba was, in money, about 1,500,000,000 of francs; in national strength, its fortresses; in blood shed in the field, 60,000 men; and in honour, the disbanding of its army, and a foreign garrison to keep a close watch over an empire in chains. This is what the last aspiration of Bonaparte to the throne and to glory cost his country. Eleven hundred and forty thousand foreign soldiers were at that moment trampling under foot the soil of France.

XXI.

The allied powers, however, at the moment they were thus imposing chains upon France, were also chaining the King to the constitutional system which they had imposed upon him by their counsels in 1814, and which they judged to be a salutary necessity for the popularity of the throne in France. A strange spectacle, well calculated to make the statesman observe the gradual triumph of the principle of liberty in Europe. Here was the counter-revolution, armed and victorious, itself imposing conditions of popular government on the old regime!

"The allied cabinets," said one of the stipulations of the treaty, "find their guarantee in the enlightened principles,

Stipulations of the Allied Powers for constitutional government.

magnanimous sentiments, and personal virtues of the King. His majesty has acknowledged that, in a kingdom torn for a quarter of a-century by revolutions, it is not force alone which can restore peace to the mind, confidence to the heart, and equilibrium to the social body. Far from thinking that the King will lend an ear to imprudent or impassioned counsels, calculated to renew alarm, and to reanimate hatred or divisions in the country, the allied powers feel reassured by the declarations of his majesty in 1814, and especially since his return. They know that the King will oppose to the enemies of the public weal his attachment to the constitutional laws promulgated under his auspices, and his strongly-declared intention not to preserve any portion of the past, except the good which Providence has produced even from the public calamities. It is only thus that the wishes formed by the allied cabinets for the preservation of the constitutional authority of the King can be crowned with complete success, and that France, re-established on its ancient basis, can resume that eminent position which belongs to it in the European system."

XXII

On the same day that assembled Europe signed this compact with France, and with the modern spirit of intervention of nations in their own government, the Emperor Alexander, inspired by Madame de Krudener, who had followed him to Paris, signed the treaty of the Holy Alliance, the dream of his pious soul, and a sort of social contract of kings. This compact made the great fraternal principles of Christianity the code of a new right of nations between princes, in anticipation that those same principles subsequently promulgated by France, and by the revolution of 1848, should become the code of nations towards each other. It was the new European right of nations of which a mystical female had communicated the inspiration to the most powerful monarch of the coalition, and of which Alexander was desirous of being the crowned apostle. The allied powers signed it from complaisance and flattery towards the chief of the European league.

The treaty of the Holy Alliance.

England alone refused, out of respect for the freedom of creeds, Christian or non-Christian, which constitutes the basis of its civil legislation. This treaty, which the prejudices and suppositions of the liberal party have long looked upon as a mutual pledge amongst kings for the slavery of the people, was in principle only an act of faith in Providence, promulgated by a grateful prince after the deliverance of the continent, and an act which was to substitute in the transactions of empires morality and equity for despotism and brute force. We produce it here, in memory of Alexander.

XXIII.

“In the name of the most Holy and Invisible Trinity.

“Their majesties the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia—and the Emperor of Russia, in pursuance of the great events which have signalised in Europe the course of the last three years, and principally of the benefits which it has pleased divine Providence, to shed upon those states, the governments of which have placed their confidence in it alone—having acquired a thorough conviction that it is necessary to establish the proceedings to be adopted by the allied powers, in their mutual relations, upon the sublime truths which are taught by the eternal religion of God the Saviour,—

“Solemnly declare that the present act has solely for its object to manifest in the face of the universe their unshaken determination to take for their rule of conduct, whether in the administration of their respective states, or in their political relations with any other government, only the precepts of this holy religion,—precepts of justice, of charity and peace, which, far from being solely applicable to private life, ought, on the contrary to have a direct influence on the resolutions of princes, and to guide all their proceedings, as being the sole means of consolidating human institutions, and helping to bring them to perfection.

“In consequence whereof, their Majesties have agreed upon the following articles:—

“1. In conformity with the words of scripture which order

The treaty of the Holy Alliance.

all men to regard each other as brethren, the three contracting monarchs will continue united by the ties of a true and indissoluble fraternity; considering themselves as fellow countrymen, they will lend to each other on all occasions, and in all places, assistance, aid, and succour; looking upon themselves, with reference to their subjects and armies, as fathers of families, they will conduct them in the same spirit of fraternity with which they are animated to protect religion peace and justice.

"2. Consequently, the only principle of action, whether between the said governments, or between their subjects, shall be that of reciprocally rendering each other assistance; of evincing to each other, by an unalterable benevolence the mutual affection with which they ought to be animated; of only considering themselves as members of one and the same christian nation; the three allied princes only regarding themselves as delegates of Providence, to govern three branches of the same family, viz. Austria, Prussia, and Russia, thus acknowledging that the Christian nation, of which they and their people form a part, has really no other sovereign than Him to whom alone belongs the rightful power, because in Him alone are found all the treasures of love, of knowledge and of wisdom infinite, that is to say God, our divine Saviour Jesus Christ, the Word of the Most High, the Word of life. Their Majesties consequently recommend, with the most tender solicitude, to their people, as the only means of enjoying that peace which springs from a good conscience, and which alone is durable, to fortify themselves more and more every day in the principles and exercise of the duties which the divine Saviour has taught mankind.

"3. All those powers who will solemnly avow the sacred principles which have dictated the present act, and will acknowledge how important it is to the happiness of nations, too long agitated, that these truths should henceforth exercise upon human destinies all the influence which belongs to them, will be received with as much eagerness as affection into this holy alliance."

Opening of the Chambers.

XXIV.

The King only awaited the signature of the treaty of pacification to open the session of the Chambers. He re-appeared on the 30th November before them, being received on his passage, and in the assembly, with frantic acclamations, which augured less of love for his person than hatred against his enemies. It was revenge for the military acclamations which had expelled him on the 20th March, from his throne and from his palace. The assembly, almost entirely composed of men of the court, of emigrants, of writers, or journalists of the old regime, of nobles of the provinces, of royalists of the departments, deputed by public wrath to avenge France on the Revolution and the Empire, presented the spectacle of another France exhumed from the ashes of the invasion.

The ladies of the court, of the high aristocracy, and of the city, always more impassioned than the men, filled the galleries, clapped their hands, shed tears, waved their white handkerchiefs, and spread around this scene, melancholy in itself, the agitation of sinister joy, which at this moment called for acclamations, but shortly perhaps would call for blood. In the elevated ranks of society, as in the obscure ranks of the people, weak and timid females are easily excited to cruelty. They must have idols for their love, and victims for their hatred. In the accent of this enthusiasm of the females of the aristocratic world in the galleries, might be foreseen the coming exigencies of their royalism. The eyes were delighted with it, but the heart dismayed. The King, in the expression of his countenance, at once happy, overcast, and melancholy, seemed to dread this excess of love at the very moment he was enjoying it.

His brother was beaming with confidence, and encouraged these demonstrations with his looks. He felt himself, for the first time in his life, in the element of his counter-revolutionary opinions. The Chamber belonged to him, heart and soul. He saw in it his party, and he thought that party was France,

Attitudes of the Dukes de Berry and d'Angoulême.

The Duke de Berry exhibited the loyalty and carelessness of a soldier. The Duke d'Angoulême, who took the King, his uncle, for his model, and who had witnessed the fury of the south, appeared sad, restrained, and reserved. This prince, whose exterior was unfavourable, concealed under his modesty and his timidity, more political sense and moderation than any of his family. The court looked on him with disdain, because he did not participate in its passions; the people with respect, because through the homeliness of his features they discerned in him the intuitions of a Germanicus. The King loved him as a pupil, into whose mind he poured his sorrows and his lessons. He supported himself with unreserved confidence upon his arm.

XXV.

When silence had at length calmed down the murmurs and curiosities of this scene, in which the King, proscribed by the military sedition, was about to open his soul to the free and impassioned representation of his people, he spoke as follows :

"When for the first time I convoked the Chambers last year, I congratulated myself on having, by an honourable treaty, restored peace to France.

"She had begun to taste its fruits; all the sources of public prosperity were re-opened.

"A criminal enterprise, seconded by the most inconceivable defection, intervened to arrest its course.

"The evils which this ephemeral usurpation has entailed upon our country, profoundly afflict me; I must here however declare that if it were possible they could only reach myself, I should bless Providence.

"The marks of love which my people have given me, even in the most critical moments, have solaced me in my personal troubles; but those of my subjects, of my children, weigh upon my heart.

"It is to put a period to this state of uncertainty, more overwhelming than war itself, that I have deemed it necessary

The King's speech.

to conclude with the allied powers,—who after having overthrown the usurper, occupy at present a great part of our territory,—a convention which regulates our relations, present and future, with them.

“It shall be communicated to you, without any reserve, as soon as it shall have received its final form.

“You will recognise, and all France will acknowledge the profound grief I must have felt, but the salvation even of my kingdom rendered this great determination necessary and when I took it, I felt the duties it imposed upon me.

“I have ordered that this year there should be transferred from the treasury of my civil list into that of the state, a considerable portion of my revenue. My family, as soon as they were made acquainted with my resolution, have offered me a proportionate donation.

“I have ordered similar diminutions to be made in the salaries and expenses of all my servants without exception. I shall at all times be ready to bear a portion of the sacrifices which grievous circumstances may impose upon my people.

“The accounts will be laid before you, and you will recognise the importance of the economy that I have ordered in the departments of my ministers, and in all parts of the administration.

“Happy would it be if these measures could suffice for the expenses of the state! In all circumstances I reckon on the devotion of the nation, and the zeal of both the Chambers.

“But other cares more pleasing and not less important assemble them to-day. It is to give more weight to your deliberations, and to derive more instruction from them myself, that I have created some new peers, and that the number of deputies of the departments has been augmented.

“I hope I have been successful in my choice; and the zeal of the deputies in difficult conjunctures is also a proof that they are animated with a sincere affection for my person, and an ardent love for their country.

“It is, therefore, with a lively joy and the fullest confidence that I see you assembled around me, being certain that you will never lose sight of the fundamental basis of the happiness

Impression created by the speech.

of the state: a frank and faithful union of the Chambers with the King, and respect for the constitutional charter.

"This charter which I carefully studied before I gave it to the country, to which reflection attaches me more and more every day, which I have sworn to maintain, and to which all of you, beginning with my own family, are going to swear obedience, is doubtless like all human institutions susceptible of improvement; but none of us should forget that the danger of innovation is close beside the advantage of improvement.

"Many more objects of importance demand your attention.

"To make religion flourish again, to purify manners, to establish liberty on respect for the laws, and to make them more and more analogous to these great views, to give stability to public credit, to reorganise the army, to heal the wounds which have only too deeply torn the bosom of our country, finally to ensure internal tranquillity, and thus to make France respected abroad, these are the objects to which all our efforts should tend.

"I do not flatter myself that so much good can be the work of one session; but if at the close of the present legislature we perceive that we have made an approach towards it, we ought to be satisfied with ourselves. I shall spare no efforts to contribute to so desirable a result; and in order to succeed I reckon, gentlemen, on your most active co-operation."

XXVI.

Sorrow, consternation, hope, resignation, love, and anger had by turns overcast, depressed, melted, or irritated the faces and attitudes of the assembly and the galleries, at the different paragraphs of the King's speech. Tears filled the eyes of the deputies of the towns and departments which were to be cut off from the French territory. The country, even amidst its calamities, wished to retain all its children. The public were still ignorant of the amount of the sacrifices imposed upon the heart of France, and trembled to learn them. The engagements renewed by the King and his family to the charter excited, if not murmurs, at least whisperings in the galleries.

Everything that limited royalty lessened their enthusiasm, and recalled a compact with the revolution. The King's reign, according to the saloons of that period, ought to be one continued triumph over the men and things which filled them with hateful recollections.

The past, they thought, should be renewed with the King, without mixing with, or making conditions for the future. Concessions appeared to them to be weaknesses, prudence cowardice. There is nothing so impatient to reign without moderation as parties without strength, who have failed from impotence. They fancy they can hide their humiliation by their insolence.

Such was at that time the irritated aristocratical party returned from that Mount Aventine of the nobility called the Faubourg St. Germain. Anger and hope inspired it with delirium. The genius of emigration avenged itself in words upon France. After having been proscribed, it wished to proscribe in its turn; and it sought, in the King, not a moderator but an instrument. They lavished upon the Count d'Artois, and the numerous deputies of his party, acclamations, smiles, and signs of understanding, which seemed to say "Reign before hand, our hearts are with you!"

XXVII.

The King, as solicitous of his fame as a literary prince, as of that of a legislative King, had drawn up and written this speech with his own hand, with the most perfect fitness to the situation and events of the time. He possessed a tact for state ceremonies, and a perception of public opinion. Before he pronounced it he had read it to his Council of ministers and to his family; and he had required of the Count d'Artois, the Prince of Condé, the Duke d'Angoulême, and the Duke de Berry, all the princes of his house, to renew with him, on their return from their second exile, the oath to observe the charter, which they had pronounced on the 18th March. This engagement renewed at such a moment, in full freedom, and under the protection of 1200,000 bayonets, which kept the

The royal family take the oath to the charter.

pressure from without in proper bounds, appeared to the King an act of high moral dignity and generous policy. He had, moreover, the ambition, the only one permitted to his years and his nature, to bequeath to history the fame of a monarch the founder of institutions. He wished his heirs to take, in the face of the nation and of Europe, the engagement to respect its institutions.

The Count d'Artois had hesitated for a moment. Some inveterate royalists and ecclesiastics by whom he was surrounded, advised him not to swear to a charter that admitted human limits to that divine authority which flows with the blood of Kings in their veins, and with the oil of consecration upon their head. That portion of the clergy who rebelled against the concordat, and who wished to restore with the unity of power the unity of worship, inspired him with scruples against a charter in which dissenting doctrines were tolerated. The Prince of Condé, enfeebled by age, and who had never recognised the revolution upon the field of battle except to fight against it, equally refused to sanction this revolution with his oath. The old courtiers and the ladies by whom he was surrounded advised him to assign his infirmities as the cause of his absence.

These princes at length yielded, less to the entreaties of the King than to the injunctions of Europe. They raised their hands to confirm the promises of their chief, speaking in the name of his dynasty. These scruples and murmurs of their conscience, however, were betrayed by their friends in the two chambers, at the moment when the Duke of Richelieu pronounced before the King the names of the peers and deputies, to require them to take the oath. The Count Jules de Polignac, a young courtier who enjoyed the greatest intimacy, and the most paternal favour, with the Count d'Artois, refused to swear. M. de Labourdonnaie, Cardinal de Périgord, and Marshal de Vioménil only replied by their silence on the calling of their names. A deputy of Montauban, named Domingon, arose and demanded to be heard in explanation of his refusal. The Duke of Richelieu equally embarrassed in imposing silence on the conscience of a deputy, and in allowing the King to

M. Lainé is voted President of the Assembly.

hear an objection which might be offensive, looked at his majesty and, interpreting his gesture, replied that the immemorial customs of the monarchy interdicted subjects from speaking in the King's presence without his authority.

These signs of the internal repugnance to the spirit of the charter were sufficient for the Count d'Artois and his court. They contained a tacit protest, or reservations which time might brood upon under the ruin of these liberties. The King saw in the smallness of their number a ratification of his wisdom by the almost unanimous voice of the nation. His return to the Tuileries was a popular triumph, which sufficiently repaid him for the coldness and the murmurs of his own court. A part of the aristocracy and the church had protested but the mass of the nation agreed and applauded. This prince, more firm in his designs than he was at that time thought to be, was already escaping with persevering energy from the besetting of family, of caste, and of the priesthood, to seek for his support in public reason, and for his popularity in the future. His family was embittered against him, the emigrants rebellious, the church discontented, his people submissive and grateful.

XXVIII.

The chamber presented according to parliamentary usage three candidates, one of whom the King himself was to choose as president of the assembly. M. Lainé, full of that civic courage which he had twice exhibited, in the course of fifteen months, even in defiance of death, was the greatest citizen of the nation. The assembly still just, at that period because it was new, gave a unanimous vote for M. Lainé. The King felt happy in choosing the champion of freedom against tyranny, and of constitutional right against insurrection. M. Lainé was the personification of a liberal charter. No one could better represent the people before the King, or the liberal King before the free people. He comprised the citizen in the faithful subject, the faithful subject in the citizen, the man of both periods. This choice was applauded by all; it was better than a declaration, it was a symbol.

M. Lainé's speech.

XXIX.

"Gentlemen," said M. Lainé, on taking possession of the president's chair, "the ruling sentiment of the French, that which absorbs all hearts, that of our country's calamities, keeps gratitude silent in my own breast. Who could, in fact, in the midst of our common misfortunes, form any other wishes, or have any other thoughts than to soften the evils which for eight months past have overwhelmed France and the King? One great hope is, however, given to us. The solemn oath just taken within these walls permits us to believe that debates on party politics will cease at length before a charter which rallies all opinions and secures all interests. Let us show that a common calamity elevates the character! Let us leave it to God who afflicts this people to judge kings, but let us surround our own with all the strength for which he has occasion, to extinguish passions, stifle discords, make France respected, and its liberty protected."

The chamber unworthy to hear these words, and incapable of comprehending them, replied to the King's speech with an accent of painful resignation to clemency; thus indicating from the very outset that it would obtrude its resentments and its reprisals upon the crown, and that it would only respect its government on condition of ruling it.

"In the midst of our vows of concord," said the chamber, "it is our duty to solicit your justice against those who have endangered the throne. Your clemency has been without bounds, we are not going to beg of you to retract it, but we supplicate you, in the name of the people themselves, victims of the calamities under which they are crushed, to let justice at length proceed from where clemency has stopped, that those who even now, encouraged by impunity, are not afraid of exhibiting their rebellion, may be given up to the just severity of the tribunals. The chamber will zealously concur in framing the laws necessary for the accomplishment of this desire. Only confide your authority to hands that are pure!"

In this first demand was felt an impatience to act with

Dispositions of the Chambers.

rigour, in the second an impatience to seize upon the royal authority. These *pure hands*, an allusion to Fouché and Talleyrand, constituted an offence to the King himself, under the form of counsel, and he resented it from the bottom of his heart. He began to fear his friends more than his enemies.

The Chamber of Peers, into which M. de Talleyrand had introduced men more moderate, more experienced in revolutions, but also more servile, had neither the courage to contradict nor to ratify the language of the Chamber of Deputies. They looked how the wind blew, that they might follow it. They stammered forth a repetition of the King's speech in an obscure address, in which the forms of the paraphrase covered the paucity of ideas.

XXX.

The inclinations of the Chamber of Deputies, which were all in accordance with the opinions and enmities of the Count d'Artois, and of the government in expectancy which surrounded that prince, soon mastered the actual government, and forced it to give by severe laws satisfaction to the passions of the chiefs of the royalist party.

The Duke of Richelieu, absorbed in the conferences and negotiations with the allied powers, for the liberation of the territory, could not refuse to the foreign cabinets those rigours which were called acts of prudence. He left to his colleagues, the ministers of war, of the interior, of justice, and of the police, the initiative of measures and of laws, and the direction of the chambers. To restore the independence of France; to maintain harmony amongst the different members of the royal family, by concessions of influence in the cabinet, calculated to prevent factions in the palace; to organise an army attached to the King, which would release him at a later period from the pretorians of Napoleon; to moderate the imprudent and already cruel zeal of royalism, repressing at the same time the spirit of sedition in the revolutionary party; to re-establish in the disturbed south the empire of the laws, in place of the sanguinary turbulence of factions; to preserve harmony between the

Difficulties of the Duke of Richelieu's position.

government and the chambers, so long as this harmony should cost the government neither baseness nor crime ; to caress the emigrants while he restrained them, to pacify the people, to restore the finances, ruined by the war and by the price it was necessary to pay for peace ; to raise public credit, and call upon it for the ransom of the country, by throwing upon the future a portion of the weight that lay too heavy on the present ; and for all the rest, to leave much to the King, to his brother, to time, to events, to the free play of opinions in the chambers, to the gradual subsiding of the passions, and to that lassitude which in human affairs follows great popular convulsions ; such were the ruling thoughts of the Duke of Richelieu.

His nature, his faculties, and his habits did not fit him either for the details of administration, the manœuvres of intrigue, the adulations of the court, or for the struggles of eloquence with parties in the tribune. His was a mind more penetrating than exercised in political contest, more generalising than active. He had occasion in the council for hands to serve him, and for voices to explain him. He gave himself up to these hands, and these voices, and above all to M. Decazes.

XXXI.

The council, though unanimously royalist, was divided into two distinct shades of opinion. M. de Vaublanc, the Duke of Feltre, and M. Dubouchage, belonged by their excessive zeal, to the party of the Count d'Artois ; they aided the violence of this party in all their circulars, and in all their operations. M. de Richelieu, M. Decazes, M. de Barbé Marbois, and M. Corvetto were of the King's party. But these two opinions mingled together at the council board in one common zeal for the consolidation of the throne.

The King himself, though more enlightened than his brother, and more moderate than his own party, brought back from his second exile a species of regret for his want of firmness in 1814, and a certain bitterness of governing, natural to a man who had suffered under so much treachery and outrage. The foreign powers, the nation, his own family, demanded suréties

Laws of rigour proposed by the government.

of him against the return of calamities which weighed heavily upon all. He was loudly accused of weakness. He therefore endeavoured to prove his vigour. A rivalry of royalism reigned at this moment between himself and his court. He did not wish to be too much behind his partisans, lest they should seek in his brother a personification of the throne, which might be elevated against him in his own court. He appeared therefore to yield with complaisance to the instigations and the rigours which his tribunes, the journals, the saloons, and the meetings of royalist deputies incessantly addressed to his ministers.

Three bills with this import were concocted by the government, and presented to the Chamber. A law against seditious cries, a law which suspended the guarantees of the individual liberty of the citizens, and finally, a law constituting the ancient prevotal courts, a sort of revolutionary tribunal of the monarchy.

XXXII.

The first of these laws inflicted long imprisonments on the authors of seditious clamours. The preamble insulted with the bitterest expressions, the parties hostile to the restoration. The Chamber received it coldly, as a tame effigy of its resentments. The second, which breathed hatred and menace against the revolution, drew plaudits from the parliamentary parties, whose requirements it satisfied. This was the temporary dictatorship of the police over the liberty of the citizens. The government itself thought it too absolute; but the private acts of violence which were causing so much bloodshed in the south, imposed at this moment a necessity upon ministers to arm the hands of government with despotic power, to snatch it from individuals. There was humanity even disguised under this appearance of rigour, which, by throwing victims into prison, saved them from assassination. The discussion which was timid on the part of the opposition, was implacable on the side of the over-zealous royalists. M. d'Argenson having had the courage to speak of the blood of the protestants which was flowing in the south, was vociferously called to order, as if the

Excessive zeal of the royalists in the Chamber.

denunciation of crime was itself a crime to ears that wished to hear nothing.

"Do you think you are still here at the *Champ de Mai*?" was loudly demanded of him. M. de Vaublanc combated the observations of M. d'Argenson, not with the calm authority of the minister, but with the impassioned declamation of the court neophyte. "We require an extraordinary power," he said, "to watch over the safety of the State. An immense majority of the French demand their King!" Acclamations of "Vive le Roi!" responded to him from all the monarchical benches. The discussion was no longer by speeches, but by cries and gestures. The bill was carried; hardly fifty voices protesting against the excess of its precautions. The liberty of the citizens was at the mercy of the police.

XXXIII.

On the discussion of the law, the royalists finding the penalty of transportation too merciful, loudly demanded that it should be changed to death. "Death against the wretches who dared to struggle against the legitimate government," voted M. Humbert de Sesmaisons. "Death against all who shall display any other flag than the white flag," voted M. Piet. "Perpetual hard labour," continued M. Josse de Beauvoir, "since the King's return, crime has been caressed instead of scourged!" "No, no, death! death!" exclaimed M. de Sesmaisons. "The penalty of parricides!" added M. Bouin. These furious exclamations rose one above another, as a rival ship of pledges given to royalty. Each seemed desirous of flinging his name to history with his vote, as a defiance to humanity. No one concealed his rage, but all made a title of it to the favour of futurity, a glory beyond their party. Futurity has, indeed, preserved these titles, and now appreciates their value.

XXXIV.

On the 17th of November, a discussion took place on the prevotal courts, a jurisdiction without guarantee, like despotism;

Discussion of the laws of rigour.

without appeal; like passion; without mercy, like death. Each department was to have one of these tribunals, composed of the *prevôt*, or principal judge, and four assessors. They tried all political crimes, plots, agitations, and insulting cries against the King or his family. The penalties were as numerous as those of the code, from fines to death. The chief of the tribunal sought out and denounced the crime; within four and twenty hours the examination took place, the court gave judgment without adjourning, and sentence was executed without appeal. Suspicion, as in 1793, was converted into criminality. The propensity to blood was so enticing, and the public rage so little anticipated the remorse which is subsequently excited by such laws in the national mind, that two men who have since become renowned by their genius, and the moderation and elevation of their characters, M. Cuvier, illustrious in science to all ages, and M. Royer Collard, the type of philosophy in public affairs, supported this law as a necessity of the times. One member, even, carried away by the vehemence of his royalism, which did not allow him to recognise justice in any cause but his own, demanded that a portion of the other tribunals should be suppressed, and that the irremovability of the judges should be suspended for one year, that the apprehension of dismissal might have a corresponding effect on their judgments.

This was carrying the reign of terror into the very hearts of the judges, in which wisdom elsewhere protects impartiality by independence of action. A number of propositions of this nature crowded upon each other in the assembly, to enhance, as it were, the price of passion.

XXXV

In the discussion of these laws, the Chamber of Peers gave utterance to murmurs of conscience and protests, by the mouths of the same men who had braved, under the convention, the sword of the other parties. The heroism of revolutions is not found in men of excess, but in men of moderation,

Dispositions of the Chamber of Peers.

Lanjuinais proved himself in the Chamber of Peers the same as he had been during the reign of terror.

"Your law," he said, "is unjust, because it makes a crime of suspicion, and because it sends the accused before judges who are dependent upon the accuser! It is the law of 1793, but still better calculated to intimidate all imaginations, and to enslave all consciences! Rome and England even in public emergencies had no such laws." The peers, by turns victims and instruments of the tyranny they were required to enact, were irritated at the voice of Lanjuinais as passion is irritated when disconcerted by a truth.

Boissy-d'Anglas, Marmont, and Lenoir Laroche, without denying the necessity of rigorous law, endeavoured to modify the despotism and irresponsibility of these tribunals. Fontanes, a man of a gentle and cultivated mind, but a lover of despotism under all titles, defended them by that eternal motive which justifies all dictatorships; that the first necessity of societies is order, and not liberty; a true axiom for times and men who make a distinction between order and right, which are inseparable in a perfect and moral state of civilisation. The Duke de Brissac, brought up in the same school of the Empire, found them indulgent. The most bitter opinions during the restoration were almost always those given by men pliant to the tyranny, and accomplices of imperial despotism under Napoleon.

The law was passed by this assembly with the undisguised regret of not having to pass one more absolute and efficacious. It was evident that the Chamber of Peers would oppose neither modification nor obstacle to the violence of the Chamber of Deputies. M. de Talleyrand and Fouché when introducing into the senate the living remains of all the courts and all the revolutionary governments, had not introduced into it either civic courage, independence, or dignity of character. The Chamber of Deputies had the passions of the times; the Chamber of Peers had its servilities. It was the dépôt of thirty years of revolutions, wherein the courtiers of Hartwell, the myrmidons of Napoleon, the revolutionists of '89, the legislators of the Empire, and the worn-out military men,

The Count d'Artois declines a vote of thanks proposed to his son.

only met each other in one common lassitude, and in a general complaisance for all powers protecting their titles, their fortunes, their dignities, and their repose. Some rare exceptions offered a contrast there, rather than an opposition to the general spirit of pliancy and adulation. The national aristocracy no longer existed. Cardinal Richelieu had killed it; and it could only be replaced in a French senate by a court aristocracy, made to serve, not to resist.

XXXVI.

The Duke of Fitzjames, a descendant of the Stuarts, attached to the Count d'Artois, a man of a giddy head, a warm heart, and a noble soul, naturally eloquent, better calculated than any of the prince's friends to take a decided part in the parliament, and to recall the voice of the doctrines of Cazalès, tried to make the Duke of Angoulême popular, by proposing a vote of thanks to this young prince for having preserved the south from an invasion of the Spaniards. The prince merited this tribute, which the Count d'Artois set aside with a paternal decorum and modesty which excited the sympathy of the nation. "You will pardon," he said, ascending the tribune for the first time in his life, "the emotion of a father who listens to the eulogium of a son worthy of all his love and that of France. He is absent, and it is my duty to be his interpreter. If he had been happy enough to display against the external enemies of France the courage that you wish to honour in him, such a recompense would crown his glory and my satisfaction. But as a Frenchman, a French prince, can my son forget that it was against deluded Frenchmen he was compelled to fight? Permit me to decline for my son the thanks acquired by such a title."

The assembly acceded to this scruple of the heir to the throne; and the Duke of Fitzjames, in withdrawing his proposition, conferred upon his master the honour of this refusal. This homage to the national sorrow, inclined many hearts to the Count d'Artois.

The King could not, without umbrage, see the princes of

The Duke of Orleans.

his house ascend the tribune, in the Chamber of Peers. Opposition would have been fatal; popularity even was dangerous in a rank so near the throne. When congratulating his brother on his oratorical success, his Majesty could not forget the Duke of Orleans, whose parliamentary character, if imitated by this prince, might agitate the Empire, and even menace the throne itself.

XXXVII.

The Duke of Orleans, whose conduct we have seen at once irreproachable and ambiguous since 1814, his caresses to the army during his residence at Lille, his flattering reminiscences of the tri-coloured flag, his departure for England, his residence in London during the hundred days, and his adroit affectation of separating his cause from that of Ghent, had just returned to France. His suspicious attitude in England, where the most liberal members of the opposition sought him out, and held him up as a contrast to the unpopularity of his race; the rumours which had been current in France, during the hundred days, of an Orleanist plot, to which he was not an accomplice, but of which he served as the banner; the interrupted march upon Paris of the Generals Lallemand and their *corps d'armées*, an enigma of which he was, unknown to himself, the true explanation; his obsequious character in the court; his opinions, transparent in all his acts, though veiled by his language in public; his rank which commanded respect, while his independence gave room for popularity; his talents, very distinguished, although of that secondary class which attracts consideration without exciting envy; the souvenirs of the revolution which surrounded him with a twofold interest; a man of 1792 for the patriots, an emigrant for the royalists, an accomplice for one side, a victim for the other, a citizen for the former, a prince for the latter, considerable for all; all this constituted the Duke of Orleans at once a strength and a menace for the monarchy. The King was justly offended at the affected isolation in which this prince had kept himself from him and the other princes of his house, during the in-

His reconciliation with the King.

terregnum of Ghent. The Duke of Orleans, after the defeat of Waterloo, had allowed a report to circulate, to justify himself, that it was by the express order of the King, he had abstained from taking arms against his country. The King who knew the contrary, did not readily pardon him for a duplicity of character and language by which this prince profited. He had not, however, opposed his return to France after the re-establishment of his throne.

The Duchess of Orleans, the mother of this prince, daughter of the Duke of Penthièvre, and widow of Philippe Egalité, had been requested by her son to negotiate with the King for his return, his reconciliation, the restitution of those immense domains the appanages of his house, and all the titles and royal favours which were the object of his ambition. This princess, a victim of the revolution, the virtuous wife of a corrupt husband, an irreproachable widow, and a tender mother, devoted by her name, by her misfortunes, by her exile, and by her sentiments, to the royal house, was a natural and venerated intercessor with the court. She had become answerable for her son, and easily obtained from Louis XVIII. a forgetfulness of the past, and all the favours calculated to attach the Duke of Orleans, through gratitude, to the royal family. The King had spoken to him with the lofty sincerity of the chief of a race, who fears nothing for himself, and who combats suspected ambition by well-understood interest.

"You are my cousin," he said to the prince; "you are the nearest prince of the blood to the throne, after the Duke of Berry. You have a fairer prospect of the crown by right than by usurpation. I have also as much confidence in your good understanding as in your good heart. I feel quite at ease, for you are in one of those happy situations in which virtue leads more directly to greatness than ambition."

The King had confirmed these words by a legal and irrevocable title to the rich domains of his appanage, which until then the Duke of Orleans possessed only in virtue of the revocable word of the king. The prince made a vow of innocence, of gratitude, and of unalterable fidelity. He had been summoned to take his place with the princes of the royal

Speeches and votes on the laws of rigour in the Chamber of Peers.

family in the Chamber of Peers. But though he was silent in public, and reverential to the court, his coquetting with public opinion, his caresses of the budding opposition, his court, almost exclusively formed of the wrecks of the empire and the army, tacitly contradicted out of doors the attitude he assumed within the palace. The generosity of Louis XVIII. was not deceived, but it was justly vigilant. He gave the princes of his house to understand that their presence at the sittings of the Chamber of Peers would be disagreeable to him. He gave a colouring to this injunction by urging the impropriety there would be in any member of his family opposing, by word or vote, the acts of his ministers; and the still greater impropriety in the voting of princes so near the throne in the great political proceedings which were to be tried in the Chamber of Peers, about to be changed into a tribunal of state. The princes acceded to his wish.

XXXVIII.

The speeches and the votes upon the three laws of rigour proposed by the ministry were no less sinister in the Chamber of Peers than in the Chamber of Deputies. The same spirit animated both bodies, and even the best were subject to its influence. M. de Rougé demanded the penalty of death against all who should display any other than the white flag. "Was it not a flag displayed at Grenoble," said he, "which has been the cause of our late misfortunes?" M. de Chateaubriand was indignant at that article of the bill which declared a penalty against those who should threaten the legality of the possession of national estates.

"A barbarous enactment," said he, "which will reach the unhappy despoiled emigrant whom a purchaser, jealous of his property, may surprise shedding some tears and breathing some regrets upon the tomb of his father! How are we to impose a silence which in case of need the very stones themselves would break that serve as a boundary to those inheritances which it is proposed to secure to their present possessors?"

"For what crime will you reserve death?" said M. de

Prevalence of sanguinary feeling.

Frondeville. "Have we islands to which we can banish such monsters? One of the calamities of our age is that cold philosophy which places the mildest penalties by the side of the most atrocious horrors. Let us threaten parricide with death, and we shall prevent parricide!"

Thus the penalty which kills was substituted for that which corrects; and humanity itself became a crime in the eyes of those avengers of humanity who were themselves returning from exile, and the blood of whose relatives had been shed upon every scaffold of the revolution. The defender of Louis XVI., De Sèze himself, who had with so much glory endeavoured to save an august head from the political axe, now called for the penalty of death. All breathed the retaliation of the counter-revolution, and blood could therefore not be slow in flowing. It was already shed by the hands of the people, in the impassioned provinces of France. The laws were now going to snatch the sword from the hands of those people, not to disarm, but to imitate them.

BOOK THIRTY-THIRD.

The Reign of Terror of 1815—State of Paris—Situation of the South—Massacres at Marseilles—Assassination of Marshal Brune at Avignon—Massacres at Nismes—The *Verdets*—Intervention of the Duke d'Angoulême—Heroism of General Lagarde—Assassination of General Ramel at Toulouse—The twins of La Réole—Their trial—Their death—Labédoyère—His journey to Paris—His arrest—His trial—His death.

I.

POLITICAL opinions, hostile, but temperate as the climate and manners of the people, had not stained the capital with blood during the numerous political changes which we have narrated. The spectacle of the reign of terror, during the eighteen months' immolation by the convention, had inspired Paris with a satiety and horror of blood. The lively manners of the people—the events daily occurring under the eye, and becoming a necessary spectacle and food to public curiosity—the habit of seeing the rise, the fall, and the rising again of parties and of men—the numerous distractions in which the affections of nations, as well as their enmities evaporate—the presence of a foreign army, and of a civic force, controlling the multitude on the spot and at the instant—and above all the magnitude of a city, the inhabitants of which unknown to each other do not cherish those local antipathies of parish feuds, of religion, and party politics, and those personal animosities which are only extinguished by death—had preserved Paris from crimes.

II.

But the south was bubbling and boiling ever since 1814. The south is the focus of French imagination, and imagination is the boundary of popular impressions. It is through this

organ that the more indolent or more active sensibility receives and throws back again with more or less passiveness or force the reaction of events which humble or exalt a people. The southern populations of France constitute this movement, and sometimes this vertigo of the country. Aix had given birth to Mirabeau in '89—Marseilles had sent her children to provoke the 10th August in '92—Avignon had equalled in 1793 the crimes of Rome under her proscribers—Toulon had given itself to the English—Nismes to the Protestants—Lyons had armed and committed itself to the flames, to oppose the tyranny of the revolution, of which that plebeian city had been one of the most enthusiastic foci—the Cevennes, still bleeding with the executions of Louis XIV., kept alive in the hereditary opposition of the two creeds, by turns persecuted and persecutors, a haven of hatred which fomented the political animosities.

The Restoration had made the protestants tremble for the preservation of freedom of conscience; they had dreaded the inevitable alliance between the descendants of Louis XIV. and the successors of Bossuet, and though professing republican opinions, they had hailed as a salvation the return of Napoleon. Their joy had exasperated the catholics and the royalists, who were burning to avenge in turn the insults they had suffered, and the momentary triumph of their antagonists. Religion in their eyes consecrated their hatred. The news of the defeat of Waterloo, and of the abdication of Napoleon, broke the seal which still kept them within bounds. The people of the south were burning with anger and impatience against the military accomplices in the usurpation of their country.

Marseilles, the foremost city in the movement, could not restrain the cry of *Vive le Roi!* in the face of General Verdier's troops, who still cried *Vive l'Empereur!* General Verdier who was an old soldier of the Egyptian and Spanish wars, but inexpert in the management of seditions, vainly harangued the groups of people, who mistook his moderation for fear. An explosion took place, the *tocsin* sounded; the royalists, who constituted the immense majority of the country, hastened at the sound of the bells to assist the insurgents in the city.

Massacres at Marseilles.

General Verdier had force sufficient to subdue everything; but knowing the intelligence of the Emperor's disaster, and not wishing to cause a vain effusion of blood, he retired upon Toulon, abandoning Marseilles and a part of Provence to the enthusiasm of their royalism. This humanity of the general was fatal to the imperialists, who were marked out by their employments or their opinions to the irrepressible fury of the people. The massacre commenced with the innocent remains of these Mamelukes whom Napoleon had formerly brought from Egypt, and who were peaceably concluding their lives in a quarter of Marseilles where the sea and the sun reminded them of the East. Their innocent blood discoloured the waters of the port. Neither their wives nor children were spared. Furious ruffians, imitating the assassins of September, threw themselves madly upon these old companions of Napoleon, fancying that while they mutilated them they rent asunder that odious glory of which they were the living witnesses. The people added to their dead bodies, which were thrown into the sea, those of some inhabitants of Marseilles, known for their attachment to the Emperor. Assassination was succeeded by pillage, till the alarmed citizens at length took arms and quelled a commotion which, though gratifying to their feelings, threatened their families, their fortunes, and their dwellings.

III

Marshal Brune, who commanded the army of the south, learned at Toulon the massacres of Marseilles. His soldiers wished to avenge them, but he restrained their ardour, and resigned his command to the Marquis de Rivière, the commissioner sent by the King to govern and pacify the south. Brune had only evinced, during his mission to Toulon, the firm neutrality of attitude of a general, who, while defending his country against foreigners, is desirous at the same time of restraining the passions of the interior. The royalists had nothing to reproach him with but his too easy obedience to the orders of Napoleon. He had hastened to yield to destiny,

Attack on Marshal Brune at Avignon.

and to make his army recognise Louis XVIII. a second time, in order to avoid a civil war.

Having accomplished this duty he quitted Toulon, and took the road to Paris. He was advised, but in vain, to go by sea, that he might travel with less danger to the capital; he was told of the rashness of a journey by land, amidst an excited population, for his name represented a detested cause, and might become the incentive to a crime. Brune, however, confided in his innocence and his courage.

He quitted Toulon on the night of the 31st July. In changing horses at Aix he was recognised, and the fury of the mob around him with difficulty allowed his carriage to depart. Having arrived on the morning of the 2nd August at Avignon, he stopped at an hotel in that city near the Rhône. The news of his arrival was instantaneously spread amongst that idle population who crowd the quays, the streets, and the squares, in a climate where people live out of doors. Amongst this stirring and unsettled people the slightest murmur creates an excitement. The name of Marshal Brune, the victim of an odious calumny, had remained synonymous with a great crime in the imagination of the south. A report had circulated that this marshal, then an artisan and a fierce revolutionist, had participated in the massacres of September 1792 in the prisons of Paris, and that he had carried through the streets the bleeding head of the beautiful and innocent Princess de Lamballe.

This sinister report, which was in vain belied by the whole course of his military life, and even by his absence from Paris at the moment the crime was committed, circulated amongst the crowd. It was further added that this myrmidon of Bonaparte was going, not to the King in Paris, but to the army of the Loire, to assume its command and return to chastise the south. These rumours being fomented by persons of some credit with the people, the hotel at which the marshal had put up was attacked by an immense crowd. It was in vain that the doors were closed and barricaded, and that M. de Saint-Chamont, the prefect of Avignon, who was accidentally in the same hotel, made himself known, and for a time dispersed the mob; it collected again in front of the town house. M. Puy,

Murder of Marshal Brune.

M. de Saint-Chamont, and M. de Balzac hastened with a handful of brave and generous citizens to tear their victim from these madmen; they succeeded a second time, by the force of supplications and energy, in rescuing the marshal. His carriage was proceeding towards the Rhône, but was again stopped in this short passage; and being assailed with clamours, pelted with stones, and threatened with knives, he was brought back a third time into the court yard of the hotel,

The prefect, the mayor, the officers, the aides-de-camp, Major Lambot, commanding the department, M. de Montagnat, chief of the national guard, M. Hughes, a lieutenant-colonel, on leave at Avignon, ranged themselves before the gate, opposed their bodies against the irruption, and swore to the people that they must pass over their dead bodies before they stained the city with the blood of a marshal of France, immolated without defence, without a crime, and without a trial. The cries of the people then rose against these magistrates and citizens, some of whom were compelled to retire that they might not increase the exasperation by their presence; others were thrown down, trampled on by the multitude, and dragged in the dust. Major Lambot got up, and with Hughes charged the assailants sword in hand: the latter fled, the door of the hotel was cleared, and Brune was again about to escape. M. de Balzac, the sous-prefect of the town, was repelling the most furious of the last groups of the mob, and the marshal's defenders were beginning to breathe, when at the moment peace was thought to be re-established, a discharge of fire-arms resounded from within the hotel, and the smoke of several shots issued from the window of the apartment where the marshal was awaiting his fate. One of the assassins, with his discharged gun in his hand, showed himself at the balcony, and announced to the people their dastardly triumph and vengeance—Brune was stretched dead upon the floor! A few villains, abandoning the attempt to enter by the door, had scaled the roofs of the neighbouring houses without being perceived, and creeping from thence to the garret window of the hotel, they soon found their way to the apartment in which Brune was congratulating himself on his deliverance. He was

Atrocities of the people on his dead body.

reading, at the moment, to strengthen and console himself under so much hatred, an affectionate and tender letter from his wife. Standing erect before his assassins, he never changed colour, or stooped to make supplications. "What do you want with me?" he asked them with a calm voice. He was replied to by a pistol shot; but with a motion of his hand he turned aside the muzzle, and the ball missed its object. A second ball from a carabine, however, struck him in the head, and laid him dead at the feet of his murderers, while the crime was hailed with shouts of joy by the multitude outside.

A vain attempt was made by the magistrates to relieve their city from the shame of this atrocity, by false attestations that the marshal, frightened at the rage of the people, had killed himself; but the people contradicted this official falsehood by fresh horrors. They pursued the unhappy marshal even after death; they tore his body from the coffin, dragged it by the legs upon the pavement, and flung it from the bridge into the waters of the Rhône; and, as if such a death had not been sufficient, they fired repeatedly at the body, and pursued it with execrations, as it floated down the current. Frequently pushed from the shore by the fury of the inhabitants, the river at length carried it into a retired creek between Arles and Tarascon, where the birds of prey, attracted by the sight of a dead body on the sand, alighted in flocks amongst the reeds.

The appearance of these birds attracted the attention of a poor fisherman, and led to his discovery of the body of the marshal, whose name and tragical death he had heard of. He buried it, unassisted, in the night-time, being fearful that even this pious act might be imputed to him as a crime; and it was not till two years after that he revealed the particulars of this mysterious sepulture. These funeral rites recall those of Pompey on the Egyptian sea-beach, where the hands of an old Roman soldier lighted the funeral pyre of his general.

This crime cannot be ascribed to the government, but it was the crime of the fanatical royalist opinions in the south. It was the signal for other popular crimes, which dismayed and dishonoured those provinces, and stained them with blood

Massacres at Nismes.

for many months. At Nismes, a city which has preserved something of the majesty of Rome in its monuments, and of the Trasteverini* fierceness of character in its manners, the civil rage redoubled by the fury of religion, equalled the barbarities of 1793 at Avignon and Paris. The *Verdets*, bands of cut-throats, organised under the profaned banner of religion and of royalty, overran the country, the villages, and the towns. Under the pretext of avenging upon the protestants their complicity with the Bonapartists, they assassinated whole families designated to their vengeance. After plundering and burning the chateau of Vaquerville, and consuming alive the inhabitants in the flames, around which they danced to the cries of their victims, they tore from its tomb the body of a young girl fifteen years of age, and trampling it under foot, abandoned themselves to the most brutal profanations of the body. Thousands of protestants, flying from their ruined homes, wandered about the woods and mountains. Terror or death chased them from asylum to asylum.

Thus hunted about they could not appear at the elections, to claim their rights as citizens, and to implore the patrons of their persecuted sect to defend them with the government.

IV

The King lamented the crimes committed in the name of the zeal of his partizans in the provinces. He dared not act rigorously against his friends, while he blushed to tolerate murderers. He sent General Count de Lagarde to Nismes—an old aide-de-camp and friend of the Duke of Richelieu, a man of sense, of virtue, and of feeling; a sufficiently good diplomatist also to reconcile with ability the royalist sentiments which animated himself, with the impartial re-establishment of order, and the protection of the victims who were the objects of his mission.

The Count de Lagarde, though feeble in body, possessed a

* *I Trasteverini*. The supposed descendants of the ancient Romans, who dwell on the right bank of the Tiber, whence their name.—TRANSLATOR.

Intervention of the Duke d'Angoulême.

manly courage. He did not dissemble from himself the dangers of his mission. Though he had only a handful of troops he did not hesitate, on arriving at Nismes, to arrest the chief of the agitators and assassins, Trestaillon. On this act of generous boldness, the fury of the Catholics and royalists broke out in threats and risings. The *Verdets* and the fanaticised volunteers assembled under the orders of Servan and Truph  my, worthy avengers of their accomplice Trestaillon. The troops were unequal in number to these confederates in crime.

The prefect, M. Darbaud de Jouque, a moderate but a firm man, selected by M. Decazes to bridle the passions on these banks of the Rh  ne, foresaw the insufficiency of the military power of repression. He conjured the Duke d'Angoul  me, who was making a tour through the south, to visit Nismes, that by his presence he might at once satisfy and intimidate the delirium of the population. The Duke d'Angoul  me, filled with the wisdom of the King, and who never hesitated in the performance of a duty, threw himself between the victims and their executioners. He granted the prayers of the protestants, and he pacified the catholics. He resisted with unshaken firmness the entreaties of the clergy, of the women, and of the influential protectors of Trestaillon, who dared to ask him for the release of this criminal. "No," he replied, "I shall never shield from the law assassins and incendiaries." He directed the opening of the protestant churches, which had been closed by the Reign of Terror, and departed, leaving to General Lagarde the task of completing his work, and pacifying the country.

V.

But the prince had scarcely gone when the royalists resumed their audacity. The catholics exciting the populace in the name of God and the King, surrounded the principal protestant churches of Nismes during the performance of divine worship. The doors were broken open, the faithful dispersed, the minister dragged upon the pavement of the sanctuary, the men knocked down, and the women disgraced

Renewal of the popular fury at Nîmes.

with ignominious punishment. General Lagarde hastened to the spot at the head of a regiment; dashed alone on horseback into the midst of the furious mob, attempting to rescue their victims from them, and to bring them back by persuasion to humanity and tolerance. Without consideration or pity for this magnanimity of an unarmed officer, who risked his own life to save the blood of the contending parties, the *verdetts* and the volunteers surrounded Lagarde, and assailed him with hootings, insults, and stones. A national guard named Boivin, seized with one hand the bridle of the general's horse, and with the other presenting a pistol close to his breast, fired and wounded his chest with the bullet. Though hurt, almost mortally, Lagarde, by his mental energy kept his seat in the saddle, and though threatened by an hundred weapons, he yet, with a voice weakened by the blood that was pouring from his wound, ordered the regiment to charge his assassins. The soldiers dashed upon the mob and dispersed it, and the dying general was borne off upon a litter.

The Duke d'Angoulême when acquainted with these massacres, returned to Nîmes, and sent Trestaillon and his accomplices before the tribunal. But justice, partial or intimidated, failed in its duty; the magistracy of Nîmes absolved the culprits. The people, always enthusiastic in favour of those who minister to its fury, carried Trestaillon in triumph. Boivin, the general's assassin, who confessed and gloried in his crime, was acquitted by the jury, under the pretence that he only fired to defend himself. Royalism, religion, and justice were all at the same time dishonoured by such judgments.

VI.

Toulouse imitated the agitations and the frenzy of Nîmes, but the civil furies were only prompted there by political opinions. Religion in Languedoc did not so much add the conflict of consciences to that of dynasties; but the impotency of the southern character equally impassioned there all the political movements.

General Ramel is appointed to the command of Toulouse.

The King had conferred the command of Toulouse on General Ramel, an old volunteer of 1792, who had risen from rank to rank by his courage and his services. He had commanded the guard of the council in 1797, was transported after the 18th Fructidor with Pichegru and Carnot, of whom he had been unjustly said to be an accomplice; he had escaped from Guyana in a ship's long boat, and returned to France during the last years of the Empire. He had been employed by Napoleon in Spain, but was always suspected of an inclination for the Bourbons. Since his exile with Pichegru, Ramel, being a soldier of fortune, had refused to serve during the hundred days. This reserve, so rare in an army so inconstant, had won for Ramel the confidence of the royalists. He exerted himself to restrain, on the banks of the Garonne, the sanguinary animosity of the people against the fugitive remains of Napoleon's army, disbanded and wandering about these provinces. Some of these proscribed officers, obliged to conceal themselves from the resentment of the people, had met with a generous asylum even in the house of the general. This pity was imputed to him as a crime by the royalists; the name of treason was given to the magnanimity of the soldier. The royalist volunteers, thirsting for the blood of the outlaws, openly insulted Ramel, on which he announced his resolution to brave and to disperse them.

On hearing this they assembled in groups in the public squares, and openly concerted the death of the general. They summoned the chiefs and bands of the country, to come to them in the city; they formed sinister processions in the streets, singing cynical songs, and vociferating sanguinary cries against the man who alone restrained them. Amongst these cries was that of "Long live the King," to cover sedition with a pretence of fidelity.

On the evening of the 15th August while these frantic columns were dancing to these ferocious songs on the Place des Carmes, a detachment chosen, instructed, and armed beforehand for the purpose, separated itself suddenly from the circle of the populace, of which it formed a part, sprang forward with a bound towards the hotel of the general, surprised and

Massacre of General Ramel.

disarmed the guard, crossed the threshold, mounted the staircase, and was soon face to face with Ramel.

"What do you want?" he asked them with a threatening voice and unshaken visage. "To kill thee, and in thee to kill an enemy of the King," replied one of the assassins taking aim at Ramel's breast. A sentinel rushed forward and turned the shot aside. Ramel drew his sword, determined to die as a brave man, and not as a victim. But during this movement which made the assassins draw back, another shot was fired which lodged a ball in the general's body; he sank upon the landing-place of the staircase, beside the corpse of the sentinel murdered in attempting to save him. His aides-de-camp and officers rushed out of their rooms, sword in hand, and striding over the two dying men, attacked the volunteers, and drove them out upon the square. Ramel was carried to his bed, a surgeon hastened to attend him, probed his wound, and found it mortal. He announced this dismal news from the window to the excited crowd who were roaring like wild beasts, hoping thus to calm their rage by glutting it. "So much the better!" replied their implacable voices; "but we are going to finish him: that will be more sure."

At these words the crowd demolished a triumphal arch, which had been erected in the square for the recent reception of the Duke d'Angoulême, and then made use of the beams and cross-bars as battering rams, to break down the iron railing of the hotel. The doors gave way, the soldiers who guarded the vestibule were sacrificed. The assassins ascended to the chamber of the dying general. The surgeon who was dressing his wound threw himself at their feet, and supplicated them to spare his last moments, while his aides-de-camp covered his bed with their bodies and their naked swords. Ramel, on the contrary, stretched out his arms to his murderers, and entreated them to finish their work, to shorten the agony that was tearing his entrails. One of the assassins, adding derision to the crime, and sarcasm to the blow, struck him in the face with a sabre cut. "'Tis to obey the general," said the villain smiling. The others imitated him successively, plunging their bayonets into the body of Ramel, as they repeated the sangui-

Indignities perpetrated upon the body.

nary raillery, until he was no longer anything but a shapeless mass. The assassins disputed with each other the honour of dyeing their arms in the blood of the general, as they defiled with songs of triumph round his ensanguined couch.

The night alone, and the intoxication of the populace, put an end to this scene, worthy of Saint Bartholomew and of the days of September. The troops sent by Marshal Perignon, governor of the province, only arrived in time to bury the victim. Justice, as at Nismes, refused to avenge him. It allowed public indignation against the murderers to evaporate by its tardy proceedings; it acquitted the chiefs, and only condemned the executioners to trifling penalties, under the pretext that they had only struck a dead body!

VII.

Such was, for many months, the vengeance of the south against parties suspected either of complicity with the soldiers of the Emperor, or lukewarmness for the Bourbons, or of dissent from the fanatical faith of the people. It will be seen that vengeance was the passion of all parties in this climate bordering on Spain and Italy, the lands of the passions and of vengeance.

The royalists of Paris, ashamed of, and embarrassed with these criminal proceedings, tried rather to deny, than to excuse or chastise them. One man of courage in the cause of humanity, M. d'Argenson, dared alone to re-echo the cries of so many victims, from the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies. On the word massacres being pronounced by the orator, the Chamber, feigning a conventional incredulity, arose with fury against him, and shut his mouth as to a calumniator; no one was permitted to say what every one knew. To denounce crime was the greatest of all crimes. The impassioned party of the Bourbons pushed their zeal for their cause, not to approbation, but to silence, that tacit amnesty for the most odious crimes.

The twins of La Réole.

VIII.

Bordeaux was fermenting with the same passions as Marseilles, Nismes, Avignon, and Toulouse.

Two twin brothers, Cæsar and Constantine Faucher, residing in the little town of La Reole, had followed together the career of arms until they had attained the rank of general. Guilty of having hailed the return of Napoleon, as a souvenir of their military lives, and of having exercised during the hundred days, civil and military functions in the Gironde, they were accused of maintaining a focus of Bonapartism in their country. Surrounded for three days in their house by a detachment of volunteers of Bordeaux and of Spanish soldiers, they had refused to open their doors to the illegal summons of this troop. This attitude redoubled against them the animosity of the royalist party. Having been arrested and conducted to Fort Hâ, they were thrown into the dungeon allotted to the most abject villains. The advocates of the Bordeaux bar, and M. Ravez himself, being indifferent, or intimidated, refused to defend them; they therefore, defended one another, lending to each other by turns before the court-martial the fraternal assistance of their unskilful, but pathetic eloquence. They were condemned to die.

A young niece, who comprised the whole of their family, went through the city in vain, bedewing with pious tears the thresholds of their accusers, of their enemies, and of their judges. In vain did each of the twins attempt to separate his cause from that of his fellow prisoner, to take upon himself the whole of the crime, and dispute the scaffold with his brother. Objects alike of the same hatred, they were equally involved in the same sentence. They marched for a whole hour in the midst of the multitude, half pitying, half insulting, and holding each other by the hand, to *La Chartreuse*, their place of execution.

As they stood erect before the firing party, they were determined to receive, arm in arm, the stroke of their deliverance, united thus in death as they had been in life. Cæsar

Their death.

gave the word to fire, and the two brothers fell together, struck but not killed by the discharge. Constantine crawling upon his mutilated hands and knees dragged himself towards his expiring brother, to embrace him once more. He reclined his head on his brother's breast, as on a dying pillow of peace and love, and in that position received the second discharge in his forehead, which at once released both souls from their misery.

We shall be silent on the names of their accusers and judges, and have only mentioned those of the victims; since the latter have pity and history for an inheritance, the former only remorse and contempt.

IX.

Whilst private revenge and judicial vengeance were thus staining with blood the south of France, the government was disgusted with these political acts of justice and executions, which must impart a sinister aspect to a reign of penitence and of peace, and which were equally repugnant to the indulgent character of Louis XVIII., the lofty soul of the Duke of Richelieu, and to the naturally generous youth, of the favourite—M. Decazes. But political passions seek to make governments their accomplices, and when these governments will not consent to be their instruments, they speedily make them their victims.

Great amnesties are the most necessary acts, and at the same time the most difficult, to make acceptable to those parties who have felt themselves oppressed. The pardon magnanimously given by power, and energetically imposed upon the conquerors, is the heroism of restorations. Louis XVIII., the Duke of Richelieu, and M. Decazes wanted not this conviction, but the necessary firmness against the thirst of reprisals which was consuming the King's friends. The court, the saloons, the journals, the tribune, and even the sacred churches and pulpits resounded with accusations and imprecations against the impunity afforded to the real or supposed conspirators of the 20th of March. To the excessive indulgence of Louis XVIII., and to his confidence in the men of the Empire, were

Labédoyère.

attributed the fall of the throne, the exile of the Bourbons, and the devastation and occupation of the country by the foreign armies. Some demanded vengeance, others implored for pledges; but these pledges and this vengeance were equally comprised in blood. Louis XVIII. wished to spare its effusion, but he did not think he could succeed in moderating the resentment of his party, otherwise than by granting them a little. He limited in his thoughts, to some illustrious culprits, the small number of victims it was unavoidably necessary to sacrifice to political justice. Not being desirous, however, of seizing these culprits, he had given them time to fly or to conceal themselves. But the unintelligent zeal of his partisans, and the bitterness of party hatred, served him beyond his wishes. Two of these great victims were brought to him against his will, and their actual presence in the dungeons of Paris left him no other choice between a clemency which would be an accusation of weakness and treason against himself, and a severity which would tarnish his reign in the cold and impartial judgment of posterity.

These two men were Labédoyère and Marshal Ney.

X.

After the occupation of Paris, Labédoyère had followed the army beyond the Loire. Nobody stood more in peril than he did, for no one before him had given the signal and the example of a premeditated defection under arms. By drawing over his regiment he had drawn over the whole army. Napoleon received from him his second throne, the Bourbons were indebted to him for their second exile, and France owed him its ruin. An assiduous attendant on Queen Hortense, and admitted to the Emperor's table at Malmaison to the very last day, his affectionate attachment to his family, and to a country which could no longer offer him anything but a tomb, had prevented him from following Napoleon to Rochefort and to St. Helena. Instead of availing himself of a passport which Queen Hortense had procured for him from Fouché, to fly from this burning

His journey to Paris.

soil, Labédoyère saw the Emperor depart for his exile, and then joined the French army behind the Loire.

His friends, Generals Excelmans and Flahaut, whom he rejoined at Riom, appointed him chief of the staff of the *corps d'armées* cantoned in that town. He had learned at Riom the proscription of all the leading chiefs of public opinion during the hundred-days. No one more than he should have put faith in these warnings, but he neglected them. The giddiness which leads a troubled conscience on to ruin had seized upon him. His heart was in Paris, and the attraction of that city veiled from his eyes the danger of re-appearing there. We can no otherwise explain the fatality which urged him thither. Generals Excelmans and Flahaut combated in vain this aberration of mind. Labédoyère was but twenty-nine years old an age at which dangers disappear before desires. He would not listen to his friends; but procuring a passport under a borrowed name, and evading the friendly watchfulness of Excelmans, he took his place in the public diligence from Riom to Paris.

XI.

The roads leading from the capital to the army were narrowly watched at that period by the spies of the royal government and of the allied powers. The slightest movement of these troops might compromise the peace, and rend the country in two. The relations of the generals with the centres of public opinion in Paris, were of too important a nature not to keep a strict eye upon them. Labédoyère, met in the carriage one of those agents of government superintendence, who was there either by accident or design, and who concealed, under the apparent indifference of a traveller full of business, the mission of observation with which he was charged. The martial, melancholy, proud, and pensive features of the young general, indicated too much anxiety and mystery to escape the scrutinising glance of a man whose profession it was to read the index of the human countenance. The more we seek to veil the features, the more they betray the secrets of the soul, and

He falls in with a spy.

tempt curiosity to divine them. Even the closed lips and silence of Labédoyère but the more attracted the attention of his fellow traveller. He seemed to let out in spite of himself, some involuntary expressions against the Bourbons and their ministers, and some tears for the conquered country and the proscribed army; then, as if he had been seized with dread and repentance at having thus betrayed himself, he entreated Labédoyère to forget what he had heard, and feigned a hypocritical royalism, leaving very transparent the dissimulation of this second profession of faith. Labédoyère, however, continued silent.

The spy, then taking another course, related to his travelling companion the arrest of Lavalette, which was not yet known in the army. Lavalette was dear to the heart, and an accomplice in the cause of Labédoyère. The general could not, therefore, dissemble his emotion or his paleness in listening to the details of his friend's arrest. These symptoms betrayed him, and he allowed the adroit spy to draw from him even his name. This person, after some slight reproaches on the temerity which made Labédoyère brave the dangers of a return to Paris, offered him his friendly services, and insinuated himself so much into his confidence, that the general, on his arrival, allowed his obliging protector to accompany him even to the door of the asylum where he was going to take shelter. This was the house of a person attached to Labédoyère, in one of the faubourgs of the East-end. It was scarcely daybreak, and the fugitive was to remain in his retreat until night, before venturing into streets. Guarded by the vigilance of friendship, concealed and barricaded in an upper room of an unsuspected house, he threw himself upon his bed and fell asleep, with anticipations of a happy meeting with his wife and child.

XII.

Meanwhile the spy, sure of his prey, had gone to offer him to M. Decazes, then prefect of police. The Prussians, apprised by M. Decazes, surrounded the house with a battalion of their troops. Labédoyère taken by surprise made no defence. He

He is arrested.

surrendered to the police agents, who conducted him to M. Decazes. This magistrate put a hundred questions to him, the answer to every one of which could only be an acknowledgment of his guilt. Fouché who was still minister of police at that period, seemed to lament the imprudence of this victim, who had not been sought for by the government, and who thus came himself to force into an act of rigour. The minister of war, Gouvion St. Cyr, ordered a court martial. The vengeance of the royalists, the favour of the Bonapartists, the recrimination of the foreign masters of Paris, with the passions or the curiosity of all, impressed upon this political and military trial the solemnity of justice, the bitterness of anger, and the interest of a drama. The journals and the saloons forestalled the sentence by imprecations which called for blood, and which dishonoured justice. Some females of the highest rank were implacable in their remarks. It would seem as if generosity is the companion of strength, and that the weaker the sex the more devoid it is of pity. History is bound to notice this, in order to stigmatise it. High birth, great fortune, and literary education did not, in this case, and in many others, preserve the females of the aristocracy of Paris, and of the court, from that thirst of vengeance and that sanguinary joy which women of the most abject condition exhibited under the reign of terror, at the doors of the revolutionary tribunals. Elevation of rank by such base ebullitions of feeling only renders more remarkable the viciousness of the heart. There appeared in the language, in the gestures, and in the eyes of some females of the elegant society of Paris, as fiery a degree of anger, and as eager a thirst for vengeance, as in the female auditors of the convention. The political writers, as it always happens, favoured and fed these vile passions by their diatribes; hired flatterers of all opinions sufficiently rich to pay for this complaisance of hatred and of blood.

XIII.

The trial commenced on the 14th August. The room in which it was held, filled from an early hour in the morning by ladies of the court and by foreign princes and generals, con-

Labédoyère's trial.

querors whom the decency of victory should have kept away from such a scene, resembled an amphitheatre prepared for a combat of the circus. The appearance of Labédoyère was awaited by some with that cruel impatience which longs for the humiliation of an enemy, and rejoices beforehand in the hope of being avenged; by others with that curiosity which begins with indifference, and ends in the presence of the victim by an involuntary sensibility. There was in the accused sufficient to excite at once this twofold feeling.

He was the most culpable and the most interesting of the men of the hundred days. Born of an ancient family, surrounded from his cradle with monarchical bigotry and fidelity—deriving from his ancestors, from his paternal family, from the family of his wife, and from that young wife herself, nothing but counsels and pleas of fidelity to the Bourbons—compelled to struggle against his own nature and his conjugal love to support his new opinions against the inclinations, the habits, and the domestic relations of his former self—a criminal in his own eyes, and in the eyes of all, but a criminal pardonable from his youth, from his enthusiasm, and from his fanatical love of glory, seduction, country, and even of ambition, a vice ennobled in the soldier by the sacrifice of his life,—he could not defend himself against his broken oath, his violated discipline, and the ruins of his country, displayed under his eyes, and which spoke more trumpet-tongued than his accusers themselves. But he was created to create indulgence, excite pardon, and draw forth tears. At length he appeared

XIV.

His costume, consisting of a green frockcoat, without epaulettes or decoration, but which displayed the cut of a uniform, indicated that he had done justice upon himself before he invoked the indulgence of his country, in having laid aside the insignia of his rank and the rewards of his valour. His form set off by this simple prisoner's dress, was lofty, noble and firm, like that of a soldier accustomed to stand erect under fire. His features, though handsome and firm, displayed the

His examination.

gravity of suffering thought, and the pallidness occasioned by sleepless nights and prison reflections. This personal grace had contributed to his crime, by exposing him to the seductions of the imperial court ladies, who had exhibited glory to him under the features of defection. Their hero had become their victim. In contemplating his martial beauty, it was felt that he had been the hero of that conspiracy of aides-de-camp and of females who set up the popularity of their saloons, and the intoxication of their enthusiasm at the price of defection from the Bourbons.

The Court, more impartial than the auditory, was moved at the aspect of the young warrior they were going to try according to law, but whom they could not help pitying from the fellowship of camps. He was asked his name, his age, his rank, and if he had received this rank from Louis XVIII.

He replied with a modest countenance, and a frankness which accused itself, that he had, in fact, received from the King the command of his regiment; that he had marched from Chambéry to Grenoble by the orders of General Marchand, commandant of that place; that he had drawn over his soldiers with the cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" in the presence of Napoleon; that he had resisted the reproaches and reprehension of General de Villier, his immediate chief, when trying to recall him to duty and discipline; that he thought he had seen at that moment the superior interest of the country effacing the duty of the soldier; that he had no other vindication to offer than the testimony of those who had witnessed this fatal moment of his life, that the tribunal might judge not the fault alone, but the seduction of the emotions and circumstances which had preceded and accompanied that fault.

These witnesses were accordingly called; and their evidence, in conformity with that of history, did not excuse, but it did not aggravate the defection. The accent of these witnesses, the chiefs, or companions in arms of the prisoner, evinced the sorrow of men who lament the necessity of accusing, but who cannot absolve. It was too true that the young colonel had premeditated at Chambéry the part of a deserter; that he had sounded the opinions of his officers, harangued his soldiers,

Evidence of the witnesses.

substituted for the white flag the eagles displayed on the branch of a willow tree, distributed the tri-coloured cockades which had been found in a drum, or prepared for a moment of explosion; that he had rejected the voice, the order, and the supplications of his general, had marched to meet the Emperor, embraced and brought back in triumph the man he was sent to fight against, tempted from the foot of the ramparts the regiments of Grenoble to insurrection, broke open with his battalions the gates of the city, and had been the first to give a fortified place, an army, a people, and a route to Paris, to Napoleon.

XV.

His accusers had no occasion for further proof of a crime thus avowed and attested. They confined themselves to demanding, as an example to those armies which have the privilege of arms, the double duty of patriotism and discipline, and which, from the confidence of governments, carry the fate of nations in their swords, that Labédoyère should suffer the military condemnation already awarded to him by the public conscience. They did not conceal either their grief or their pity; they did not insult the man while accusing the soldier.

Labédoyère, after listening with resignation to these words from the organ of the court-martial, arose and pronounced his defence. His voice bore the accent of his conscience, a sad conviction of his fault, a martial firmness in the face of those consequences he was about to suffer, a patriotic and christian reparation, voluntarily offered to the King, to his country, and to his family, in expiation of the calamities, of the blood, and of the tears which he had cost them. It was felt that his hereditary traditions had resumed in these last moments their empire over his opinions, that his young wife had insinuated into his prison her adjurations to repentance, her hopes of pardon, of life redeemed, and of long happiness still upon the earth; and that the piety of his mother introduced into his solitude had called upon him, in the name of death, for the confession of his error, which conjugal tenderness had insinuated to him in the name of love.

Lafayette's defence.

He did not plead his innocence but his honour. "If my life only was in question," said he, "I should not detain you; to know how to die is my profession. But a wife the model of every virtue, and a son in the cradle, might one day or other accuse me for my silence. The name I leave them is their inheritance, I ought to leave it to them unfortunate, it is true, but free from stain. I may have been deceived as to the real interests of France; led astray by the souvenirs or honourable illusions of camps, I may have mistaken chimeras for the accents of my country. But the greatness of the sacrifices which I made in tearing asunder the dearest ties of rank and family prove, at least, that my conduct was not influenced by any vile motive of personal interest. I deny nothing, but I know that I have not conspired. When I received the command of my regiment, I did not believe that the Emperor could ever return to France:—gloomy presentiments, however, weighed upon me at the moment I departed for Chambéry. This vague feeling of sadness arose from the impression which public opinion had made upon me." Here he drew a political picture of the first fall of Napoleon, of the general unpopularity which drove him from France, of the enthusiasm justified by the virtues of Louis XVIII. which smoothed the way for the Bourbons to the throne; he showed this happy commencement of their reign being overcast by little and little, under the faults of the King's government, and preparing the way for an approaching return of the Emperor. He was doubtless going to explain how this disaffection of the people for the Bourbons had made him despair of the country, and had turned his thoughts towards another public salvation in the reign of Napoleon, abdicating despotism to become the protecting genius of the nation and of liberty. He was interrupted, however, in this exposure of faults which in his mouth might take the character of an accusation, instead of the accent of an apology. This was not his intention; he did not, therefore, persist, but resumed his defence. "Yes," he said, "I ought to confine myself to the confession of an error. I confess with sorrow, in looking at my country, that my error has been in mistaking the intentions of the King, but his re-

Effect of Labédoyère's defence.

turn has entirely opened my eyes! All the acts that have emanated from his royal authority bear the stamp of excellence, of wisdom, and of moderation. I see all promises fulfilled, all guarantees consecrated, the constitution perfected, and foreigners I hope will see a great nation of Frenchmen united around their King. Perhaps I am not destined to enjoy this spectacle, but I have shed my blood for my country; and I wish to persuade myself that my death, preceded by the abjuration of my errors, may be useful to France, that my memory will not be detested, and that when my son shall be of an age to serve his country, no one will reproach him with bearing my name."

The manly but evident emotion of his countenance, his gesture, and his voice, completed the pathos of these words. The most indifferent shed tears, and even his enemies could not harden their hearts, though the passions of the day had closed them to mercy.

XVI.

The historians of the Napoleon party have thought it necessary to misrepresent facts, to glorify the accomplices of the hundred-days. In the character they have drawn of Labédoyère they imparted to it a colouring of Roman stoicism and implacable defiance to the Bourbons, in order to present to the people in him not a natural man, but a hero and a martyr of opposition. They have passed over in silence these touching words of the dying man; but we restore them. Doubtless, it does not become the accused to flatter his judge; and even justice in the mouth of a guilty prisoner becomes suspicious, when the eulogium is addressed to a sovereign who holds in his breast both death and pardon. In this point of view, Labédoyère, even if repentant, would perhaps have done better to keep silence on the virtues and the magnanimity of the King. But if reflection had, in fact, recalled his sensitive mind to a more equitable appreciation of the character of Louis XVIII., and the part he had to fill on returning from a second exile to restore a monarchical and constitutional liberty; if the minister of

He is condemned to death.

religion introduced into the prison by the cares of the prisoner's family, had inspired him, with a true feeling of his fault, the avowal which might redeem it before God; if patriotism had really convinced Labédoyère that the rallying of all Frenchmen around a throne of necessity was the only safe-guard of the country from the foreigners; or, finally, if the tears of his wife and the smiles of his child had drawn from him the promise not to repel a pardon which they were soliciting for him, and which might preserve for them a husband and a father, should we reproach this young man for a conscientious penitence, for an act of religion or a sensibility of heart, and travesty under a savage obstinacy what in him was nothing but remorse, piety, or love? No, history ought not to be a false witness, arranging or disguising, according to the ends of party, the last words of the dying. It should delineate the man as he really was, and faithfully repeat to posterity that which it heard. It is thus at once more touching and more instructive; it is also more sublime, because nature, in whatever she says, has accents which the spirit of system will never attain.

XVII.

The words of Labédoyère, though fruitless for his acquittal, were not lost upon the minds of the spectators. Whilst the tribunal was deliberating they remained immovable, silent and affected, riveted by anxious expectation to their places.

The accused was condemned to suffer the pain of death. He had four-and-twenty hours to apply to a court of appeal. This time was granted to the entreaties of his family, to enable them to solicit the King's pardon, rather than from any supposed benefit to be derived from this proceeding, for he had confessed everything. A young orator of the Paris bar, then already celebrated as a political advocate, and still more celebrated since in the tribune, M. Mauguin, defended this desperate cause before the court of appeal. He moved public opinion, he touched the judges, but he could not convince them. A second sentence of death confirmed the first. Labédoyère still uncertain if the influence of his noble family might not

Efforts of Labédoyère's family to save him.

obtain from the court perpetual imprisonment in place of a tomb, fortified his soul in his cell with the resolution of the soldier, the resignation of the christian, and the prayers of the dying: ready for life or for death, according as the heart, forgiving or implacable, of the King should decide at this moment on his fate. His mother and his wife besieged the portals of the palace; but, trembling lest reasons of state should prevail in the Council of the King against the natural disposition and magnanimity of the princes of the royal house, they collected 100,000 francs in gold, to bribe the gaoler of the prison for the escape of the condemned. This offer which was suspected by the government, was refused by the keeper of the Abbaye. Nothing more than a desperate supplication remained for the mother and wife of the prisoner. The most rigid orders interdicted the guards of the palace from granting an entrance to these suppliants, to spare the court from the embarrassment of an implacable severity. These guards, however, were less pitiless than the courtiers, they relaxed their stern vigilance before these two weeping ladies. At the moment when Louis XVIII., leaning upon the arms of his attendants, was descending the grand staircase and crossing the vestibule where he was to get into his carriage for his daily drive, the young wife of the condemned, only nineteen years of age, her infant in her arms, in deep mourning, with hair dishevelled, and eyes streaming with tears of anguish, threw herself between the prince and the steps of the carriage, and exclaimed in a voice stifled with sobs: "Pardon! Pardon!" The King drew back, at once moved and discontented; but the fear of refusing a satisfaction to his party, and of incurring those reproaches of weakness with which he was besieged even in his own palace, prevailed over the spectacle of this suppliant who asked him for so many lives in one. He fortified himself with his impassibility of countenance, and bowing with an apparent good nature which contrasted with his rigour to the young wife:

"Madam," said he, "I know your sentiments and those of your family for my house, it is painful to me to refuse a pardon to such faithful servants. If your husband had only offended me, his pardon would be granted beforehand; but I owe satis-

Final efforts of his mother.

faction to France, upon which he has drawn all the evils of sedition and of war. My duty as a king ties up my hands. I can do nothing more than pray for the soul of him whom justice has condemned, and to offer my protection to you and to his child." After these words the King was borne into his carriage and the windows were closed.

The hapless wife fainted upon the track of the wheels.

XVIII.

Meanwhile Labédoyère, suspended between the despair of leaving his wife a widow, his child an orphan, and his mother inconsolable upon the earth, and the last glimmering of hope which the relations of his family with the court allowed to penetrate into his dungeon, employed his last hours in pouring out his soul in letters to his mother, to his wife, and to the King. He did not implore or beg for his life; he acknowledged his faults to disburden his conscience, that he might not carry before the great judge of all, either the sophistry or the obstinacy of the man of party. He would not leave, through pride, an example fatal to the loyalty of the soldier and the discipline of his companions in arms. His fault had never been without remorse and agitation. Misfortune had restored to him moral light and peace. He had received with the piety of his family the exhortations of a minister of the religion of his mother. He sanctified his agony and his tears by prayer and by the acceptance of his punishment. Every minute that passed diminished the short space of time left for pardon. This was the last day, and the evening was coming on without any noise at the door of his prison announcing to him a message of mercy.

After the fainting of his young wife under the carriage wheels of the King, his mother, stronger in her age and her piety, had persisted in supplicating without hope. In deep mourning, and covered with a thick veil, concealed, by the disobedient indulgence of some courtiers and some officers related to her family, in the shadow of the vestibule, she waited in mortal anxiety the return of the King, resolved to embrace his knees

Labédoyère is taken to the place of execution.

when he should alight from the coach and to let herself be trampled under his feet rather than give up, without a final effort, the life of her son. But the King who anticipated another heartrending scene, and wished to avoid it, had ordered that every suppliant should be kept at a distance from him. A rampart of valets, of guards, and of courtiers accordingly surrounded him the moment he touched the threshold of his palace, and kept the poor mother at a distance from him. Her cries and sobs alone reached the ears of the King; but he stifled their echo in his heart, for fear of being deficient in policy while yielding to nature.

Cruel and ill-understood duty of Kings, who struggle against the instinct of feeling, that infallible voice of God himself, and who think that the effect of vengeance upon men is more efficacious than magnanimity! Madame de Labédoyère was carried back to the bosom of her decimated family, and overwhelmed with inconsolable grief by those very princes whose return they had longed and sighed for all their lives! The triumph of their opinions became thus, by a cruel mockery of fate, the anguish of their hearts and the mourning of their house.

XIX.

It was six o'clock in the evening: at the same moment, a carriage, escorted by gendarmes, was bearing Labédoyère to the place of execution, under a garden wall on that same plain of Grenelle which a few days before he had contested with the enemy. He was accompanied by a priest who recited to him in a low voice the prayers in the pangs of death. On alighting from the coach he perceived amidst a little group of curious persons attracted to the spot by the rumour of the execution, a faithful friend, Cæsar de Nervaux, whose visits had often consoled him in the solitude of his prison. The presence of this witness, a friend at an hour when all else upon earth are enemies, and the consolation of dying in the presence of one at least who would shed an honest tear to his memory, threw a gleam of saddening joy over the countenance of Labédoyère.

His last moments.

He advanced towards M. de Nerveaux, and the two companions in arms embraced each other affectionately. They exchanged some rapid and interrupted words in a low voice. Historians assert that M. de Nerveaux promised his dying friend to avenge him: but vengeance, a sentiment altogether human, existed no longer in the soul of Labédoyère, which was full of religious hope and divine forgiveness. M. de Nerveaux only promised his friend to avenge him on oblivion, by the fidelity and tenderness of his recollection.

Labédoyère approaching the soldiers ordered for his execution, and walking from the wall towards them, appeared slowly to measure the number of steps which ought to separate him from his executioners. He stopped a moment on the spot which he seemed to have chosen for his death. Then, as if a sudden thought had struck him, which called him back to life to repair a lapse of memory, he returned hastily towards the priest, whispered something in his ear, and embraced him; after which resumed his chosen place in front of the firing party, awaiting the final blow. The officer who commanded the veterans approached him in order to bandage his eyes, to spare him, with the customary consideration at executions, the sensation of looking on the arms directed against him. But with a gesture he declined this last act of kindness, needless to those who like him have been familiar with death on so many fields of battle. He threw his hat upon the ground, and untying his cravat, begged one of the soldiers to accept it as a present from a dying man, and keep it in memory of him. The soldier, though moved, declined the gift as at variance with the laws of military discipline. Labédoyère, however, insisted, and the soldier at length replied: "Well, then, I will take the handkerchief; but it shall be respectfully to cover your face after death."

XX.

Satisfied with this pious resolution of the soldier, Labédoyère handed him the handkerchief, and advanced a few paces closer to the firing party, until the muzzles of their muskets almost

Labédoyère's death.

touched his breast. The emotion, not of fear, but of bidding farewell, had deprived his features of their natural colour, but not of their firm expression or intrepid look. He instinctively turned his head towards the side where M. de Nervaux was praying for him, as if to bestow his last look on friendly eyes. Then baring his breast, he said with a firm voice to the veterans, "Fire, my friends!" The volley replied to his voice, he staggered and fell, pierced with a number of balls. The smoke of the discharge covered for a moment the soldiers and the body. When this was dispelled by the breeze, the priest who had attended the execution, approached the body extended on the border of a ditch, knelt down, and steeping a handkerchief in the warm blood flowing from the breast of the deceased, which he had promised to take as a relic to Madame Labédoyère, he retired.

Such was the end of this third martyr of the hundred-days; the first act of justice of the law, after the horrors of the assassinations of the people. It was impossible to pardon him, and still more impossible not to pity his fate. Neither interest nor ambition had caused or debased his crime; he had yielded to that martial popularity, to that seduction, to that attraction of youth towards the emperor. These feelings had shown him the patriotism but not the defection, the glory but not the breach of discipline of which he was guilty. The fanaticism of great innovations had fascinated and incriminated his mind; but the fault had scarcely been committed when it began to goad him. Before he had expiated it with his life, he had made an expiation of honour. God and men were satisfied, and could the royal house of Bourbon require more? No. The cruel joy it thus afforded to its partisans was a concession to the enmity of the royalists. Concessions of this nature do not appease parties, they only heighten their thirst for more; they sadden a whole reign, they cramp the mind of a nation, they light up resentments which are never more extinguished.

Louis XVIII., by this inflexibility so contrary to his character, thought he took rank amongst statesmen. He sacrificed his heart to a vain policy. A disarmed King, conciliatory and pacific, his strength and greatness consisted in clemency.

Reviews of the policy of the Bourbons.

Napoleon had left him no other superiority to distinguish him than magnanimity; and that at least he ought to have made his own. It was not by executions that he could outlive battles; in his soul alone he should have sought his genius. The royalists in his court, and the foreigners in his capital, imperiously demanded of him to avenge them and himself. This is true. The blood of Labédoyère was offered up in satisfaction to the King's party, and in reparation to Europe. But if he made this sacrifice to his court, Louis XVIII was no longer King; and if he made it to the foreign powers, he was no longer a Frenchman. In the first case, an instrument of the animosity of some; and in the second, an instrument of the passion of others; he lowered himself both at home and abroad. He failed, moreover, in the part which he had wisely marked out for himself in the solitude and meditation of his long exile, as a sovereign pacificator; for to pacify is to pardon. When the object is to conciliate a people, it is not blood that should be thrown amongst the parties, but indulgence and mercy. The execution of Labédoyère was the first stain on this reign, destined soon after to be tarnished and saddened by others.

The horizon so serene in 1814 began to be overcast. Nothing was heard in the court and in the chambers but cries of vengeance. Chance, at this time, also delivered into the hands of the Bourbons the most illustrious of these victims. Marshal Ney. It was the evil genius of the Restoration that made them this fatal gift. In presenting them with culprits, it tempted them with their blood. This blood, justly or unjustly shed, must recoil upon their memory, and deprive them of the noblest *prestige* which their race had derived from the revolution, that of pardoned martyrdom, of proscribed innocence restored, and of a magnanimous return to their native land.

Until this day they had been the visible Providence of their country, arriving in the midst of its distresses, averting its dismemberment, shielding it with their legitimacy against Europe, reconciling it with all nations and with itself. But from this day they descended from this sublime rank, to the rank of princes enslaved to the passions of the moment,

Impolicy of rigour.

obedient to the resentments of their party, instead of mingling all parties, even the guilty ones, in the impartiality of their pardon, and forgetting that after intestine struggles, especially when they are complicated by patriotic struggles against foreign powers, and when errors are excused by illustrious exploits and great glory, there is but one justice—amnesty.

BOOK THIRTY-FOURTH.

Trial of Lavalette—His condemnation and escape—Fury of the Chamber at the news—Arrest of Marshal Ney—He is sent to Paris and brought before a court martial—Noble conduct of Marshal Moncey—The Court declares itself incompetent—He is brought before the Chamber of Peers—Implacability of the ministers—Debates and divers incidents—Evidence of Bourmont—M. Bellart's address to the court for the prosecution—Quibbles of the defence—Attitude of the Marshal—His condemnation—Vindictive intrigues of the royalists—Magnanimous intercession of Madame Hutchinson—Ney in his prison—His last moments. His interview with his family—His execution—Reaction of public opinion in his favour and against the Bourbons.

I.

THERE are times and seasons of a cruel tendency, even when men are disposed to clemency. Vengeance is a vice so natural to the human species that the triumphant opinions of the moment seem spontaneously bent on avenging themselves at the very time that governments are inclined to pardon. Those governments which resist this base passion of the human heart, and refuse this gratification to the anger of the times, merit well at the hands of public morality and of posterity. Those, on the contrary, which yield up victims to the pressure of circumstances, tarnish themselves for ever by this severity, or this complaisance; and for the short and wretched popularity of the moment they renounce that which alone is durable—the popularity of the human heart. They are accountable to history not only for the blood they themselves demand, but also for that which they grant to the resentment of their party. At this day when opinions which were burning in 1815 have cooled down—through the remoteness of the events which had inflamed them—when the conquerors and the conquered, Louis XVIII., Charles X., the Dauphin, the Duchess of Angoulême, the Duke

Trial of Lavalette.

de Berry, the Richelieus, the Lainés, the Talleyrands, the Fouchés, the Neys, the Labédoyères, the Lavalettes, the most insatiable members in their rage for justice of the Chambers and the Senates of 1815, sleep together in the same dust, what politician of that period would now arise with the same hatreds and the same fanaticism which inflamed him then? What friend of the Bourbons still living that would not redeem at the price of his blood, the stains and reproaches of which these executions have left the impress on the name, and on the cause of the second restoration? Those executions were not merely rigours, they were faults; and these faults not only retarded the reconciliation of the country with itself, its divisions being envenomed and perpetuated by political punishments, but they made of the Bourbons the interested executioners of the national anger, instead of making them the arbitrators and peacemakers of all parties. They did more, they clouded the futurity of a reign whose destiny was to be accepted as an asylum even by those who had struggled against it. They mixed up with the griefs and the resentments of the relations, the friends, and the partisans of the victims, the name of the King and of his family, who could only recover and perpetuate their legitimacy in the benedictions of the nation. All governments fall; but none are more sure of recovering themselves than those which fall in their innocence, or in their magnanimity.

II.

The trial of M. Lavalette immediately followed the execution of Labédoyère.

M. de Lavalette was an old aide-de-camp of Bonaparte in Italy and Egypt, who had quitted the army for a civil government employ. Under the Empire he was director of the post-office, a confidential place, during a reign when the most secret transactions of the citizens were spied into, as symptoms of public opinions and elements of government. It will be remembered that on the morning of the 20th March, during the Interregnum at Paris, M. de Lavalette had gone to take possession of the administration of the post-office, and

Attempts to save Lavalette.

had sent couriers to the Emperor, and to the departments, announcing the retreat of the King, and the pretended enthusiasm of the capital. After the abdication of Napoleon and the dispersion of his partisans, M. de Lavalette had been arrested. Though indirectly warned beforehand, by a voluntary indiscretion of the numerous friends he had in the King's cabinet, he had not availed himself of the information. The police were obliged, though with reluctance, to obey the court. M. Pasquier, then minister of justice, with the intention of giving time to the prisoner, and to soften by this delay the irritation against him, had withdrawn Lavalette from trial by court martial, and left him, intentionally forgotten, in his prison, to await the assembly of the civil jury, a tribunal still more harsh and arbitrary. They would have gladly forgotten him altogether, but the chamber had scarcely re-assembled when the name of M. de Lavalette excited the enthusiastic members of this body so fervent in their zeal, who loudly demanded those deeds of vengeance which they called acts of justice. After two months suspense, Lavalette was condemned to death.

Being a man much liked and inoffensive, he inspired with a generous interest those even who had not shared in his fault. The Princess de Vaudemont, a lady of influence over the court and political parties, by her connections with both sides—M. de Vitrolles, a man of ardent zeal, but of a merciful disposition to the vanquished—M. de Talleyrand—Fouché—M. Decazes, himself, a rigorous minister but an indulgent man—were desirous of saving the condemned from the execution of a sentence which had not even the excuse of an important victim. M. Pasquier, who was no longer minister at the time of trial, had done himself honour by a courageous deposition in favour of the accused. The Duke de Richelieu, by the simple impulse of his nature, revolted against this execution for the crime, not of treason, but of the fidelity of an old friend to his general. He solicited from Louis XVIII. the pardon of Lavalette; but though the King was desirous of indulgence he did not dare to grant it. Urged on between the raging anger of the assembly and the underhand vengeance of his court, "Lavalette is

Marmont's attempts to save Lavalette.

guilty," he replied to M. de Richelieu, "the Chamber demands examples; I incline to pardon, and I shall not refuse you the life of Lavalette; but rest assured that the day following that on which they hear you have obtained this act from me, you will be defeated by the majority, and I shall be compelled to sacrifice yourself." M. Decazes, who had more influence with the King, interceded also for pardon: "Find some means of appeasing the Assembly, and stopping the vociferations of its ringleaders," replied the King, "and you shall have the pardon." "I can only see one," said M. Decazes, "which is that the Duchess d'Angoulême, so influential with the royalists of the Assembly, should herself intercede with your majesty, and thus prevent the murmurs of her own party,"

The Duchess d'Angoulême being solicited to this intercession by the Duke de Richelieu, was moved and shed tears. She promised to intercede; she remembered the *Temple*. Madame de Lavalette was informed of this favourable disposition of the princess. Marshal Marmont, who commanded the palace-guard, always eager to redeem his faults towards the Emperor by services to his old companions-in-arms, undertook to conduct the wife of Lavalette into the palace, in violation of all the orders which would yield before his rank. But while this generous plot was concocting between the King, the ministers, Marmont, and the princess herself, some evil counsellors got round the Duchess d'Angoulême, induced her to repent of her virtuous intentions, and closed her heart against all magnanimity, in the name of those reasons of state which are the ordinary sophisms of the irritated passions. When Marmont appeared, with the weeping young wife of the condemned victim leaning on his arm, the Duchess turned away her eyes from the suppliant, and casting an angry look on the marshal disappeared, like the last deceitful hope of the dying.

There now remained only one resource, the escape of the prisoner. The Princess de Vaudemont superintended all the preparations for the enterprise, and it may fairly be supposed that the ministers, disposed as they themselves were to clemency, and also being friends of the princess, closed their eyes at least to a plot which so well answered their own wishes

Escape of Lavalette.

However this may be, Madame de Lavalette, accompanied by her children, was admitted into the prison the evening before the day fixed for the execution, as if to receive the last farewell of her husband. She dressed him up in her own clothes, and at the hour of shutting up the cells for the night, after the customary visits to the prisoners, Lavalette, thus disguised, and his features hidden by a thick veil, under which he affected to be sobbing bitterly, passed unrecognised through the ranks of the jailors, whose vigilance was lulled by their pity. He was received by some friends at the door, who conducted him to the office of foreign affairs, where the Duke de Richélieu had prepared an asylum for him with one of the principal officers of his department. Lavalette thus protected by those very persons who were directing a search to be made for him, awaited in safety till the commotion excited by his escape should have subsided. He was finally dressed in the English uniform by some young English officers,—Mr. Churchill, heir to one of the most historical names of his country, and Sir Robert Wilson, who personally conducted him to the frontier.

Exclamations of rage broke from the Chamber of Deputies at the news of Lavalette's escape. We recall them here as a reproach to the spirit of party, but for the honour of human nature we shall not name those who uttered them. It might have been supposed that the safety of the monarchy depended on the head of this prisoner, and the widowhood of his wife. The resentment of disappointed anger growled from that day forward against the ministers, and even against the King himself. It was no longer ministers the assembly wanted, but dictors. These murmurs threw a damp on the indulgence of the King's heart, and on the moderation of the Council of Ministers. They seemed to think that a great sacrifice was necessary to appease the irritations of the Chamber. A victim was now only required. Unlucky chance threw one into their hands. This was Marshal Ney.

III.

After the abdication of the Emperor, Marshal Ney had quitted Paris under an assumed name, and had proceeded

Marshal Ney's exile.

towards Switzerland. Still more oppressed by anxiety of mind than by the enmity of the Bourbons, he had exhibited as much indecision in his flight as in his fault. The evil genius which had taken possession of him at Lons-le-Saulnier, which had since followed him to Lille, to Waterloo, and to the Chamber of Peers, still beset him from asylum to asylum. It was not death he feared to meet wherever he went but the reprobation of his weakness. The army which had retired behind the Loire still offered him an honourable and safe retreat; but the army was Bonapartist, and he had execrated Bonaparte in replying to Labédoyère in the discussions of the Chamber of Peers. Thus pursued by the dislike of the army, by the enmity of the foreign powers, and by the vengeance of the royalists, he had now no refuge but in death; and while he fled from it he seemed to seek it.

Having arrived at Lyons, and about to cross the Alps, he was apprehensive, though furnished with a passport from Count de Bubna, general of the Austrian army, of falling into the hands of his enemies on entering Switzerland. He returned, therefore, towards the interior, and passed some days, without being recognised at the baths of St. Amand, in the département of the Loire. On learning at this place that his name appeared at the head of the proscription list, he changed it a second time, and took refuge in the mountains of Auvergne, at the chateau of Bessonis, the residence of a family related to his wife. The solitude of this place, the discretion of his hosts, and the name of a noble family of Auvergne under which he concealed his own from the curiosity of the servants, together with the vicinity of the army of the Loire which preserved the country from the prying of the police, all contributed to his concealment. Several weeks passed over in this asylum, when one of those acts of imprudence which are the snares of security, excited a suspicion in the neighbouring town of Aurillac that some illustrious outlaw had taken shelter in the chateau of Bessonis.

His arrest.

IV.

The Marshal had formerly received, as a present from Napoleon, a Turkish sabre, one of the Egyptian spoils, the peculiar form and rich decoration of which attracted every eye. This weapon always accompanied him as a souvenir and a witness of his glory. Having one day exhibited it to the admiration of his hosts, he forgot to take it back to his chamber, and left it carelessly in the drawing-room. A country neighbour on paying a visit at the chateau perceived the weapon, and was struck by its magnificence. Without any idea of doing mischief he spoke of the Turkish sabre he had seen a few days after in the town of Aurillac, and described it minutely. One of the idlers who listened to him, and who had a taste for, and a knowledge of handsome arms, exclaimed that there were only two such sabres in the world, those of Murat and of Marshal Ney. This conversation awoke conjectures in some who were present, which at length reached the ears of the prefect. This functionary being acquainted with the relationship between the family of Bessonis and that of Ney, no longer entertained any doubt that the unknown guest of the chateau was the marshal himself. He therefore sent a detachment of gendarmes, under the command of an officer, to surprise the chateau at day-break, and to bring away the suspected stranger. Governments, whatever may be their character, always find men ready to yield them up their prey. Hatred is the feeling that most zealously serves both princes and parties. If the prefect of Aurillac had had more zeal for the honour of the King than for the anger of the royalists, he would have given the outlaw time to escape his search. What, in fact, could Ney do against the Bourbons? He was ruined with all parties. His flight connived at by M. Locard, the prefect would but save a man; his arrest embarrassed and tarnished a whole reign: but these reflections did not occur to the prefect of Aurillac. At break of day the gendarmes surrounded the chateau; the officer commanding the detachment and eighteen men of his brigade entered the court-yard. The

Ney is brought before a court-martial.

tramping of the horses, the noise of arms, and the alarm of the people of the house awoke the marshal. He could still however fly, by stealing into the woods through the gardens, but he was weary of opposing his destiny: he appeared at the window, and addressing the commandant of the gendarmes he loudly declared who he was, ordered the doors to be opened, and stepping from his chamber said to the gendarmes: "I am Michael Ney," and accompanied them without resistance to Aurillac.

V.

He was there treated with respect by the prefect. His guards were withdrawn, he was only required to give his word not to escape, and he was sent to Paris under the superintendence of two officers. In passing through the cantonnements of the army of the Loire, he might have allowed himself to be carried off by his soldiers. General Excelmans offered to deliver him; but he refused, that he might not forfeit his word. He arrived at Paris at the very moment when his companion in arms and defection, Labédoyère, was falling under the balls of his executioners.

After a long examination by M. Decazes, he was brought to a court-martial, composed of the marshals and generals who had been witnesses of his valour but were free from his faults. These were Masséna, Moncey, Augereau, and Mortier. Moncey refused to sit in judgment on his old companion in glory. His letter to the King was in style and diction a model of civic courage, of respectful firmness, and loftiness of soul: "I do not know, I do not wish to know," said Moncey to the King, "if Ney is innocent or guilty; your justice and the equity of his judges will answer for it to posterity, which weighs in the same balance both kings and subjects. Ah! Sire, if your councillors were only desirous of good they would tell you that the scaffold never made friends for a cause. Is it the allies who require that France should immolate her most illustrious citizens? What, I! I pronounce upon the fate of Marshal Ney! Where then were his accusers while he was signalising himself on so many fields of battle? If Russia and

Money refuses to sit in judgment on Ney.

the Coalition cannot pardon the Prince of Moskowa, can France ever forget the hero of the Beresina? And should I condemn to death him to whom so many Frenchmen owe their lives, so many families their sons, their husbands, their fathers? No, Sire, if I am not permitted to save my country, or my life, I shall at least preserve my honour! Who amongst us will not be compelled to regret that we could not find death at Waterloo? Your Majesty will excuse the frankness of an old soldier, who, remote from intrigue, has never known anything but his profession and his country; and who ventures to think that the same voice which blamed the wars of Spain and of Russia might also speak the language of truth to the best of kings. I am not unconscious that with any other monarch my proceeding would be dangerous, but in descending to the tomb I may exclaim with one of your illustrious ancestors: 'All is lost except honour!' and then I shall die content!"

VI.

Whilst an old marshal was thus giving vent to accents of independence and delicacy of feeling, so rare amongst those whose profession forbids them to tamper with obedience, a man who had but lately been a tribune of liberty, and who had subsequently compounded with tyranny on the 20th of March, — Benjamin Constant, wrote confidential letters to M. Decazes, with a view of inspiring the Councils of the King with a spirit of indulgence. But public opinion was at that moment so implacable against Marshal Ney, that when invoking an amnesty for all the guilty, Benjamin Constant himself seemed to abandon the most illustrious, and the most culpable of all, the hero of the Beresina. It is true that at the period when these letters were written to save the life of Labédoyère, Marshal Ney was not yet arrested, or at least his arrest was not known. In giving up this victim to vengeance, Benjamin Constant thought he was only giving up a name; his letters, however, too well express the agitation and debasement of justice which prevailed at the moment not to constitute a memorial of history.

Benjamin Constant's letter to M. Decazes.

"M. de Labédoyère," said Benjamin Constant in these letters, "is very guilty; but he has been brought to this by the party which for the last fifteen months has defeated all the intentions of the King, and keeps the country in a state of perpetual crisis.

* * * * *

"When the King returned last year all hearts were with him. The army itself would have been easily gained, and this the King would have accomplished; but projects of subversion circulated around him. These were taken for the secret intentions of the King; and when a man has offered himself, a shelter has been seen against persecution, and a guarantee for interests.

* * * * *

"I affirm that this severity is not the means of safety that circumstances require; that if severity be desirable one head alone should fall, and that M. de Labédoyère, how guilty soever he may be, is not the victim to strike, if one be absolutely necessary. I should never forgive myself, I who have not that fatal mission, were I to designate a victim, and I feel that I cannot even write the words which might indicate him; but M. de Labédoyère might allege hastiness, non-premeditation, frankness, youth—I stay my pen, for my hand trembles while I think that this insinuation is already too clear, and that I ought not, while pleading for the life of one, recommend the death of another. I return to M. de Labédoyère.

"The fact is inexcusable. M. de Labédoyère cannot but be condemned. He will be condemned; I will even say that he ought to be. He has spoken to me of his defence.

"Legally no defence can avail him.

* * * * *

"I think that this plain of Grenelle, not having been stained with the blood of any one during the three months of Bonaparte's return, it would be fortunate that neither should it be under the King. Finally, I am of opinion that if a victim be necessary this is not the proper one."

Ney's prison.

The author of these letters was destined bitterly to bewail these concessions, which were only verbal at the moment they were written, but which became so many excuses for rigour when the marshal had fallen into the hands of his enemies. Even to preserve the life of one, a statesman should never give up that of another to the cruel rage of party.

VII.

The courage of Marshal Monecy was punished as a serious crime against discipline. He was exiled by the government to the castle of Ham. He entered it sadly for disobeying, but left it happy at having disobeyed.

Meanwhile Ney was languishing in the dungeons of the Conciergerie, which had witnessed the agonies of the Royalists, of the Girondists, and of Queen Marie-Antoinette, during the proscriptions of the reign of terror. His wife and children, whom he had embraced for a moment at some leagues distance from Paris, on coming to his last abode, could no longer gain admittance to him. He was put into one of those vaulted cells, gloomy and damp, which are constructed in the foundations of the building, and which only receive light and air through little windows half-opening on a narrow yard. This light, which was insufficient to enable him to read, seemed a preparation for that eternal night of which he felt the approach. He had no other occupation than his thoughts, and no other amusement than his flute. From this he drew forth airs sometimes sad as his soul, sometimes gay as the memory of his childhood, and which by their pastoral and serene accent contrasted with the gloom of his dungeon and the anguish of his actual sufferings.

One of his companions in captivity, separated from him by the thickness of the walls, Lavalette, listened, without being able to reply, to the melancholy flute of the hero. Lavalette has related that after his escape, and after the execution of the marshal, he accidentally heard one day, in his exile beyond the Rhine, one of the airs which the prisoner played in his dungeon, and that these notes resounded in a rural fête in Ger-

The court-martial declares itself incompetent.

many, bringing to his recollection the same air formerly modulated by the unfortunate captive in his gloomy cell, oppressed his heart and melted him to tears. If man would measure the suffering of his fellow being by what he himself has suffered, he might treat with rigour, but he would not torture: he is cruel only because he does not sufficiently reflect. The assembling of the court-martial, and the collecting in Paris of the witnesses necessary for the trial, made the prisoner languish for three whole months in the Conciergerie.

At length he was brought before the tribunal of his peers. Some timid considerations of legal advisers had led him to the resolution of declining this trial of a military man by military men, and demanding a political trial before the Chamber of Peers. The only benefit he could expect from this refusal of a trial by his companions in arms was delay; but this delay accorded to his demand was at the expense of his glory without securing his life. The marshals and the generals might recollect his exploits; the peers only knew his crime. His destiny, from the day that he had rejected the counsel of honour at Lons-le-Saulnier, was to vacillate between all the most fatal suggestions, from remorse to relapse, and from imprudence to weakness. To give up his life nobly was the only way to honour, or even to save it. The chicanery of lawyers is unworthy of the soldier.

VIII.

The court-martial, happy to relieve itself from the responsibility of his life or death, declared itself incompetent. The Marshal and his counsel triumphed, the people and the army were astonished, the court and the government were irritated. The ministers to hasten the catastrophe, did not wait a single day; they transferred the trial to the Chamber of Peers. The clamours of the royalists, who reproached the King for every hour of life spared to the Marshal, as a weakness and a complicity of treason, excited even the soul of M. de Richelieu. He assumed, in speaking before the Chamber of Peers, the tone of an impatient accuser, instead of the accent

The trial is transferred to the Chamber of Peers.

of the afflicted but impassable minister. It was no longer the man but the enemy who spoke. This was his only fault—the fault of the time rather than of his character. He seemed to demand not justice but condemnation, and to require it not only in the name of the country but in that of the foreigner.

“It is not in the name of the King alone,” said M. de Richelieu, “that we perform this duty; it is in the name of France for a long time indignant, and now stupified with astonishment; it is in the name of Europe that we conjure, and at the same time require you to try Marshal Ney. We venture to say that the Chamber of Peers owes to the world a striking reparation—it must be a prompt one, for it is of consequence to allay the indignation which is rising on every side. You will not suffer too long an impunity to engender fresh disasters. The King’s ministers are compelled to inform you that this decision of the court-martial has become a triumph for the factious; it is of consequence that their joy should be short lived that it may not be fatal.

The whole ministry had signed these written words of the Duke de Richelieu, in order that the parliamentary act should have the character of a diplomatic act, and of a declaration of the government. The sole exculpation, if there be any for such language, was in this excitement of public opinion to which the minister alluded. But this excitement of royalist opinion was only the anger and the misfortune of the moment. Was it the duty of a government to become its interpreter and executioner?

IX.

The Chamber of Peers obeyed the impulse of the ministers with the celerity of a body which apprehends that it may be robbed of the gratification of its resentment. In three days it constituted itself into a judicial court, or rather a state tribunal, which at the same time makes and awards its own penalties. The trial commenced on the 21st November. The galleries were filled with spectators, nearly all enemies, and several foreigners, amongst whom were remarked with pain, Prince Metternich and the members of the diplomatic body, invidious

Ney's appearance before his Judges.

observers of a course to which they were parties. The Duke of Wellington from a sense of propriety absented himself. The battle field is the tribunal of warriors. The trial had been decided between Marshal Ney and the English general at Waterloo. Wellington would have tarnished his character and dishonoured his victory in looking on the pangs of an adversary about to be executed by his own country. It was nine o'clock in the morning.

The evening before the accused had been transferred from the Conciergerie to the Luxembourg, with an escort and a precipitation which evinced the uneasiness of the government with respect to a rescue, or a rising of the people. A *corps d'armée* was stationed around the palace, which was changed into a citadel. A lower room transformed into a prison, and furnished with iron window bars, bolts, and wicket, served as a dungeon for the prisoner. He could contemplate from the window, the gardens of this palace of the Senate and the Peerage, where but a short time before he had raised his voice in self-accusation by acknowledging the disasters of Napoleon.

At eleven o'clock he was summoned to appear before his judges. He had laid aside his uniform and put on a blue coat without embroidery, a sign of mourning, or of modesty, becoming an accused before his country. Four grenadier dragoons of the royal guard marched by his side. A murmur of emotion, of curiosity, and of pity, ran through the hall and the galleries on his appearance. His attitude was in melancholy keeping with his situation. His countenance, pale after four months abode in the gloom of a prison, was calm and sad, and evinced some emotion. His lofty forehead indicated the remorse and presentiments revolving in his mind. His eyes looked proudly on his destiny. His closed lips restrained the impression of his soul. Nothing in his appearance either supplicated or defied his judges; it was felt that he was going to plead rather in excuse than justification of his conduct, and that he gave himself up rather to the good feeling than the conscience of his old colleagues. He cast a glance round the benches occupied by his judges, seeking amongst those well-known countenances some trace of friendship, of sorrow, or of hope. But all eyes

Ney's defence.

were cast down not to encounter his. He bowed to the assembly, and holding out his hand familiarly to the most eloquent of his defenders, M. Dupin, he sat down amongst his legal advisers.

The act of accusation was read in the name of the ministers. This was a history of the indecision, the weakness, and the defection of the Marshal, such as we have recounted in the course of this work. There was no occasion to distort or to colour the facts to prove the military crime. Ney listened to it without protesting by word or gesture. When the reading was terminated, the Chancellor Dambray addressed some sad but encouraging words to the accused. "It is not here," he said, "that you need apprehend meeting with any prejudice, malevolence, or partiality. We have rather to be on our guard against old recollections, and the interest inspired by a warrior so long the glory of his country, and whom we were happy to reckon in the number of our colleagues. You may speak without fear."

The accused, yielding a second time to the counsels of his advocates permitted them to contest in a paltry spirit the forms of procedure, and to demand time by pleading the necessity of a preliminary law in a court where he should have only invoked equity and conscience. The Chamber of Peers rejected these demands, equally unworthy of the cause and the man. The dignity of the warrior suffered by the pertinacity of his counsel; the interest even which his position excited was lowered by it. In such conjunctures admiration of the accused forms part of the commiseration with which he inspires his judges and public opinion.

X.

The sitting, which closed after these discussions, was adjourned to the 28th November, when the spectacle of the first was renewed. The counsel of the accused accumulated other formal objections against immediate judgment. M. Dupin himself, a consummate orator of the bar, did not seem to recollect that he was defending the character even more than the life of his client. He attached and lowered himself to these legal sophisms, which embarrass the mind without moving the soul;

Nature of Ney's defence.

while the attorney general Bellart, a man accustomed by his profession to see a victim in every accused, replied more as a pleader than a magistrate; the one desirous of absolving from all, the other of incriminating everything in the man whom they respectively defended, or prosecuted. A fatal struggle in all state trials, in which the accuser's object should be the life, and the defender's the memory of the accused.

The Chamber of Peers, weary of this litigation, only granted a few days to the Marshal's counsel to prepare his defence. The trial was continued on the 4th December; but on the opening of this sitting the Marshal, as ill advised as he had been in the preceding ones, attempted to screen himself from the accusation by the capitulation of Paris, and the treaty of the 20th November, which had been the result of it. This desperate plea, which might have been urged before a tribunal of the Coalition, was devoid of force, or application in a national court. The capitulation of Paris, a purely military convention between the allied generals and the chiefs of the army of Paris, evidently only bound the allies, and only protected the partisans of Bonaparte against reprisals by the foreign armies. It left to the actual, and every future government of France, all the rights, just or unjust, of prosecution or clemency, which belong to the governments of an independent country. The interjection of such a plea, therefore, was equally injudicious in point of ability, as inadmissible in point of right. It seemed to convey a challenge of independence to the national government, and to place the accused as if in an ancient asylum under guarantee, not of his peers and his countrymen, but of foreigners. The asylum was not worthy of one of the first soldiers of France. The court was not stopped by these objections, but proceeded to interrogate the accused.

His answers were more noble than his defence; for his soul spoke through his own mouth, and not by the subterfuges of his lawyers. He confessed, with an accent of remorse, that he had seen the King, and that he spoke of the enterprise of Napoleon as being so mad that he deserved, if taken, to be brought back in an iron cage; but he swore that he had not spoken of bringing him back himself in that instrument of punishment. That he

Witnesses against Ney.

had left Paris with loyal intentions of serving the King; that on arriving at Besançon, and seeing the excitement of the troops, he had been assured that Napoleon's enterprise was concerted with Austria and England; that he had then dreaded being the instigator of a civil war; that he had pressed in good faith the King's hand in his own, on taking leave of his majesty; that the sentiments of respect manifested by him at that moment, had sprung from his heart, that he had not dissembled in the least; that he had perhaps been misled, but had never acted with perfidy.

The accent of truth, and regret for outraged loyalty, shone forth in his answers. When the defection at Lons-le-Saulnier came to be investigated his emotion redoubled, and he unbosomed himself with still greater frankness. "I was confused," he said, "I wanted good advice and I found none. I summoned Generals Lecourbe and Bourmont to aid me with their counsel and support, but got nothing from them. One colonel alone evinced a noble resistance to my orders, this was M. Dubalen; I owe him this praise, he alone gave in his resignation."

He concluded amidst general emotion, and the witnesses appeared. The Duke de Duras and the Prince de Poix, who had witnessed the Marshal's interview with the King, both attested that he had promised to bring back Bonaparte in an iron cage. The accused feebly denied this circumstance, which appeared to weigh most heavily on his mind: "I think," he said, "my remark was that Bonaparte deserved to be imprisoned in an iron cage. It may be, however, that this threat may have escaped me, in the confusion these events and the presence of the King threw me into. I have no reason to throw any doubt on the assertion of the Duke de Duras." He triumphantly refuted the accusation of having received at Besançon a pecuniary bribe for his treachery to the King.

Another witness, M. de Favorney, without making any charge against the accused, uttered an eulogium on the fidelity of General Lecourbe which contrasted with the conduct of the Marshal. Lecourbe had died since the 20th March.

At last General Bourmont appeared. He who had been

General Bourmont.

the most intimate with the prisoner was his bitterest accuser. Having commanded under the Marshal at Lons-le-Saulnier, Bourmont had alone witnessed all the mental anguish and temptations of his chief; and was, so to speak, a personification of the Marshal's conscience before his judges. But was the conscience of this accuser himself free from reproach, impartial and uninfluenced by ambition? Did he not accuse another to exonerate himself? This is the question the spectators of the scene put to themselves. It was about to be answered by the subsequent proceedings.

Bourmont, a young and gallant combatant in the wars of La Vendée, had given early proofs of his bravery and talents against the armies of the republic. As a soldier of the civil war he had passed after the pacification of La Vendée into the ranks of Napoleon's army. The Emperor had rapidly promoted him from rank to rank, as if to show the royalist armies that military merit constituted as wide a field to brave soldiers in the camps of the nation as in the forests of the Bocage. The Bourbons, on their return, had found Bourmont in the army list of Napoleon. His royalist opinions and his military services in the new army had constituted for him a double title to the favour of these princes. His ambition had everything to expect either from their gratitude as a Vendéan, or from their justice as a soldier of France.

XI.

Such was the position of Bourmont when the debarkation of Napoleon, the taking of Grenoble, the occupation of Lyons, the visible commotion in the army of Ney, the perplexity of the marshal, the imminence of a fresh catastrophe for the Bourbons, and of a new usurpation of Napoleon, caused a struggle in the heart of the general between his ancient and his recent fidelity, his old and new fortune. Since the events at Lons-le-Saulnier, of which he had given testimony before the judges, the conduct of Bourmont had borne the impression of this struggle of his thoughts in his soul. It had been perplexed, hesitating, contradictory, according to the oscillation of

Bourmont's evidence.

events ; resisting the conqueror on the first impulse, giving himself up to him after the victory, then retracting at the last moment by desertion before the enemy, as if to impart to his return to the royal cause more value, and more premeditation to his desertion of Napoleon. He had followed Ney up to the hour and act of the defection in the square of Lons-le-Saulnier. He had immediately after quitted the army to offer his sword to the King, at Paris. Being outstripped by the Emperor at the Tuileries he had again solicited service in his cause, through the mediation of his old companions in arms, who had rashly answered for him to Napoleon. Having obtained a command in the army of the north, he had passed over to the enemy to rejoin the King at Ghent. It would have been more appropriate for such a man to call for witnesses in his own cause than to act as a disinterested witness in the cause of his old general. When justifying himself in his examination, and before the court-martial, Ney had thrown a portion of his weakness upon Bourmont. The latter, thus inculcated in the presence of his new musters, was irritated at these charges of the marshal, which lay heavy upon his past honour and his future ambition. His situation was delicate with respect to the marshal, equivocal with the royalists, reproachful with the partisans of Napoleon. If he was silent he was open to suspicion, if he accused he was ungrateful, and if he did not accuse he was lost. The knotty point of this drama lay in confronting these two men, who had both compromised themselves, and neither of whom could exonerate himself except by mutual accusations. All eyes endeavoured to explore their hearts in the expression of their countenances. They themselves avoided looking at each other.

XII

"I have already been interrogated at Lille upon these events," said Bourmont. "I abstained from making a charge against the accused, being restrained by the commiseration that is due to great misfortunes. But now that he attacks me, now that he accuses me of having approved his proclamation

Bourmont's evidence.

and his conduct, and of having insinuated to him that he would do well in quitting the King's party for that of Bonaparte, I shall speak out, and if I make him appear still more criminal he must take the blame upon himself."

Bourmont then deposed that the marshal, who at first was afflicted at Besançon at the progress of Napoleon, had subsequently said at Lons-le-Saulnier to Lecourbe and himself, his two generals, that everything had been arranged for three months for the Emperor's return, and for the seduction of the army; that the King had already left Paris; that no personal injury was intended towards him; that it was only desired he should embark for England; that they should afterwards rejoin the Emperor, by whom they would be well treated; that Lecourbe had replied to these words: "I have received only injustice from Bonaparte, and benefits from the Bourbons; moreover, I am a man of honour, and do not wish to forfeit my oath." "And I also am a man of honour," replied Ney to Lecourbe, according to Bourmont's deposition, "and that is the reason I wish to rejoin the Emperor. I no longer wish to see my wife return weeping in the evening for all the humiliations she suffered during the day." These humiliations of his wife had reference to a certain haughtiness, condescending, but not offensive, on the part of the Duchess d'Angoulême. This princess in speaking of Madame Ney before her private court remembered, it is said, that this lady, at that time handsome, stately, and of illustrious rank, was descended from a family attached to the household service of Maria-Antoinette.

XIII.

Bourmont continued: "General Lecourbe," he said, "wished to retire to his estate in the Jura; but the marshal insisted on retaining him. He read to us the proclamation he was going to address to the soldiers. Lecourbe and I censured it; but we thought that if we offered any resistance measures had been taken to counteract us, and that the influence of the marshal was irresistible over the troops. We went to the square to judge of the effect which the reading of the

Ney's indignation at Bourmont's deposition.

proclamation might produce. We were melancholy and cast down; the officers pressed our hands and said to us, 'If we had known that we would not have come!'"

At these words the marshal could no longer restrain his recrimination. "It appears," he said, "that M. Bourmont has laid down his plan for a long time, and that for eight months he has been preparing his accusations at Lille. He had flattered himself, perhaps, that we should never see one-another again; he thought that I should be treated here as Labédoyère was. It is unfortunate that General Lecourbe is not alive; but I invoke him in another place. I summon him against these depositions in a more elevated tribunal. Here M. Bourmont overwhelms me, but there we shall be judged both one and the other.

"However, I summoned these two officers to my residence; I called upon them in the name of honour to let me know their thoughts. M. Bourmont said to me, 'I agree with the opinions expressed in the proclamation.' Lecourbe said to me, 'Has that been sent to you?' I made no reply, but insisted on having their advice, and received no answer. Did anyone say to me, 'Where are you going? You are about to risk your honour and your reputation for a fatal cause!' I have only found men who have pushed me over the precipice.

"I invited them to remain with me, but they withdrew. It was General Bourmont who called out the troops: he had two hours to reflect. If he had thought my conduct criminal, could he not have me arrested? I was alone, I had not a man with me, nor a saddle-horse to escape with. He went away and took refuge with the Marquis de Vaulchier; forming together coteries to be prepared for events, and to open, under all circumstances, a door to escape by. Finally, all the officers came in a body to take me with them, and conducted me to the public square, into the very midst of the troops."

XIV.

After these words, which the accent, the solemnity of the occasion, and the approach of death, must make us look upon

CROSS examination of Bourmont.

as sincere, and which the dying man did not retract before God while marching to execution, the dialogue between the accused, the accuser, the president, and the assembly, became more direct, more pressing, and more overwhelming. Assertions and contradictions broke forth in questions and reproaches.

"Who gave the order to assemble the troops?" demanded the president. "I did," acknowledged Bourmont, "but by order of the marshal." "He assembled them," said the accused, "after I had communicated my proclamation to him." "How did it happen?" said the president, interpreting the sentiments of the judges, and addressing the witness, "that after you had disapproved of your chief's proceedings, you still followed him to the square?" "I wished to see," replied the witness, "if any opposition should manifest itself amongst the troops. As to neutralising the ascendant of the marshal over them, there was only one means, and that was to kill him." "You have said," cried the accused, "that I wore at Lons-le-Saulnier the decoration with the effigy of Napoleon; that is false. Do you then look upon me as a wretch? I must in that case have come from Paris with the intention of betraying the King! I regret that a man of understanding should employ such false and paltry arts. It is really infamous to swear to such fabrications. M. de Bourmont contributed to urge me on to defection."

Bourmont seemed embarrassed in explaining some orders of detail given to the army by the marshal or by himself. "Permit me to ask," said one of the defenders with accusing pertinacity; "M. de Bourmont states that he was conducted to the square by a sentiment of pure curiosity. Will he say that it was curiosity also which took him to the banquet given to the staff by the marshal after the proclamation?" "It was necessary," replied Bourmont, "to remove suspicion, and to avoid being arrested. The marshal was uneasy about me, and frequently sent officers to ascertain the side I was going to take." "I arrested no one," interrupted the marshal. "I left everyone free to choose. You made no objection; nobody, with the exception of one colonel who gave in his resignation,

His evidence rebutted by Ney.

made any. You had an extensive command; you could have had me arrested, and you would have done well," he added with that accent of regret, or remorse, which sometimes breaks from the labouring breast. "Yes, if you had killed me you would have done me a great service, and perhaps it was your duty to do so!"

This reproach from a faithless chief to a subordinate for having spared him before the fault was committed, made the spectators shudder. The whole agony of tortured honour in the soul of the marshal was revealed in that exclamation; and all that he had suffered was felt on hearing that longing for death burst from him. "Is it you," he continued, apostrophising his accuser, "who could have resisted the enthusiasm of the troops? I do not believe you have firmness or talent enough for that! We cannot stop the ocean with our hand," he had already said in his examination.

M. Dupin, another of the marshal's counsel, embarrassed M. de Bourmont again with an interrogatory which every reply of the witness rendered criminating to himself. "What effect did the letter and the proclamation of the marshal produce upon the army?" demanded M. Berryer, father of the celebrated orator of that name. "The soldiers cried 'Vive l'Empereur!'" replied Bourmont; "the officers were stupified." "Let the witness state," resumed M. Berryer, with a double meaning which was obvious to all, "if he himself then cried 'Vive le Roi!'"

The Assembly understood this question, as justifying the marshal and accusing the witness. Some murmured at the boldness of the advocate, others rejoiced at the embarrassment of Bourmont. A movement took place, then a silence. Bourmont retired, leaving in every breast the painful impression of a man who could extenuate when speaking against himself, and aggravate in his own justification.

The prefect of the Jura, M. de Vaulchier, a zealous, but a conscientious man, incapable of raising himself on the condemnation of an enemy, was then heard. In communication at all hours with the marshal, concerting measures for his province, he at first depicted the active fidelity of Ney, then his doubts

Depositions of other witnesses.

as to the success of the struggle with which the court had charged him, then the successive, involuntary, and rapid diminution of that fidelity in proportion as the aspect of events changed, and the troops yielded to the current of popularity swelled by the approach of Napoleon. Another witness, M. Cappelle, drew the same picture of the mental condition of the accused. Having been brought before the marshal after his defection in the square, he was asked by Ney to join Napoleon. "Nothing can induce me to do so," replied M. Cappelle; "I have sworn fidelity to the King." "And I also," said Ney, "would have wished to remain faithful to the Bourbons; but unfortunately, events will not permit me. However, no injury shall be done to those princes; they will retire to an appanage which will be allotted to them. Woe to him who shall dare to violate the respect that is due to them!"

The Count de Grivel, Inspector of the National Guards of the Jura, who had alone responded to the proclamation by the cry of "Vive le Roi!" in the square, and broke his sword before the troops of the line, had been protected by the marshal against their sedition. Being a man of feeling and of courage, he gave his evidence without aggravating.

"Why," demanded the president of the marshal, "did you not take some measure or other to prevent the seduction of your soldiers? How did your resolutions, which were so loyal in the evening, become so guilty the following morning?" "After the tempest has passed," replied the accused sadly, "it is easy to reason on its fury. I repeat that I was circumvented, drawn away as if by enchantment. I was persuaded that everything had been concerted with the allies; the idea of a civil war in the country horrified me, and I could no longer resist."

The Duke de Maillé nobly confirmed these assertions of the accused by a deposition altogether exculpatory, and in which he exonerated the marshal from all premeditation of treason. This deposition of a good-hearted man, whose devotion to the Bourbons was hereditary, soothed the mind of the prisoner, and rekindled hope in the breasts of his friends.

Summing up of the prosecutor.

General Phillip de Ségur, who has since borne immortal witness to the glory of Ney in his "History of the Russian War," spoke with the same delicacy of mind, and asserted the same loyalty of intention on the part of the marshal at the time of his departure to assume his command.

After these discussions between the accused and the witnesses, which the observations of some of the peers shamefully endeavoured to exasperate, Marshal Davoust was heard in explanation of the Convention of Paris, which, according to Ney's defenders, shielded his life and liberty against all inquiry into his acts. Davoust stated that he had understood this convention in the sense of a complete amnesty for all the acts of the interregnum; and that if this convention had not had that signification in his mind, he would have still fought and might have conquered. "Yes," exclaimed the prisoner, who had so rashly placed his hope in this capitulation, "it is on the faith of this convention that I have reposed; without that can it be believed that I should have hesitated to perish sword in hand, rather than appear here on the bench of criminals."

XV.

This last controversy being exhausted, M. Bellart began, as prosecutor, to sum up and aggravate the crime. His first words degraded the accused from his glory, before he degraded him from his innocence and his life. They displayed that antique declamation which thinks of the echo, and which forgets the rebound of the accusation in the heart of the accused. Implacable part which has to be played by those magistrates who call for penal punishment in the name of state policy, but who ought, at least, to ask nothing more than life. M. Bellart was one of those men who are not cruel by nature, but rendered implacable by profession. His heart was melting while his words were embittered by what he called a sense of duty. It is said that when consulted some months before by the family of the accused, he had given, with sincere commiseration, advice the best calculated to save him. His part now, however, was to strike him with his eloquence, and he did so.

Speech for the prosecution.

"Noble peers, when in the midst of deserts formerly covered with populous cities, the philosophical traveller, who is conducted thither by that insatiable curiosity, the characteristic attribute of our species, perceives the melancholy remains of those celebrated monuments raised in remote ages, in the vain hope of braving the hand of time, but which are now nothing more than dust and shapeless ruins, he cannot avoid feeling a profound melancholy when he thinks of the fate of human pride and human works. But how still more cruel for him who loves his species is the spectacle of the ruins of glory, fallen to decay by its own misdeeds, and tarnishing itself those honours it had so nobly won!

"When this calamity occurs, there is something within us which struggles against conscience for that routine of respect so long attached to the illustrious fallen. Our instinct is exasperated at the caprice of fortune, and we feel desirous, by a thoughtless contradiction, still to honour what beamed with so bright a splendour, at the same time that we despise and detest the author of such frightful calamities to the state.

"Such, noble peers, is the double and contradictory impression which the commissioners of the King unavoidably experience on the occasion of this deplorable trial. Would to heaven that two men existed in the illustrious accused whom by a rigorous duty we are compelled to prosecute; but there is only one. He who so long covered himself with military glory, is the same who has become the most culpable of citizens.

"Of what avail is his former glory to the nation? He has totally extinguished it by a fatal treason, productive to our unhappy country of a catastrophe upon which we dare scarcely venture to rest our attention. What matters it, that he has served the state, if it be him who has powerfully contributed to its ruin? There is nothing that such a crime can efface. There is no sentiment which must not yield to horror inspired by so great a treason.

"Brutus forgot he was a father, that he might see nothing but his country. That which a father did at the price even of a revolt of nature, the ministry, protector of the public safety, is

Its exaggerated character.

still more called upon to do, in spite of the murmurs of previous admiration, which has mistaken its object; it will fulfil this duty with rectitude and simplicity. We may, at least, spare the accused from galling declamations. Where is the necessity for them in presence of a conviction drawn from the most incontestible evidence? I shall, therefore, spare them to him, as the last homage I can offer. He still, doubtless, preserves sufficient pride of soul to appreciate its value, to judge himself, and to distinguish in those who are charged with the grievous mission of his prosecution, the truly painful mixture of those regrets which belong to the man, and those imperious obligations which are imposed by office."

After this oratorical display of circumspection, better calculated to relieve the judges of their scruples of admiration and pity than to do honour to the victim, Bellart exaggerated the accusation to that degree as to maintain that a fault of weakness was a crime of premeditation! Everything in the character, and even in the faults of the marshal, protested against a pre-conceived treason. But in the habits of legal men every accusation appears insufficient if they do not exaggerate it even to calumny. It is thus that justice itself loses its sanctity and its respect amongst men.

After the speech of M. Berryer, an incident of a tragic nature, the real cause and character of which had not been previously known, caused an emotion amongst auditors and judges, who would have been a thousand times more excited if they had then been acquainted with what we are going to recount.

XVI.

From the commencement of the trial the defenders of the accused, as careful of his honour in future estimation as of his justification at the time being, had consulted with each other as to the character they should give to his defence. Were they to think more of justifying the accused than of surrounding the event with becoming splendour in the eyes of posterity? Should they sacrifice something to a desire for life, or sacrifice all to the dignity of the soldier, and the majesty of the name. It

Concert between Ney and his legal advisers.

was not, however, for them to solve a question so personal to him they were going to defend. They thought it their duty, therefore, to discuss the matter with the marshal. M. Dupin asked him if he was desirous of living or of dying at any price? If he should conduct the defence with the sole view of preserving his life, or if he should make this a secondary consideration to the grandeur and the glory of his death: The first step in coming to so delicate a determination being to know from the marshal himself if he was anxious to live, his defenders with a discreet reserve propounded to him this terrible problem, on which his own feelings alone could properly pronounce.

"I confess to you," replied their client, equally devoid of weakness and of boasting, "that I do not fear death: I have beheld it a thousand times under every aspect in the field of battle, and amidst the snows of Russia; and I think I have surrounded my name with fame enough to blot out one day of error, and to find again, through indulgence, the glory of my name in the memory of my country. However," he added, with an impartial compassion for himself, and like a man who weighs the reasons for dying and the excuses for living, "I am forty-two years old—forty two years!" he repeated, appearing to count in his own mind the numerous days which his strong and active constitution still reserved for him in the natural course of events. "Forty-two years! And who knows if, after a retirement and an expiation of some years, the course of events, my country, the King himself, revolutions, or war, may not recall me to the assistance of France, and give me an opportunity of one of those acts of devotion, and for one of those victories which redeem in the life of a soldier, as in that of Turenne and of Condé, faults and errors, which are blotted out for ever by the immensity of the service? To live still to find again one of those opportunities of redeeming my life, would be to live twice. And besides, I must open to you my affections in their most hidden recesses of nature, or of weakness, according as they may be interpreted! I have a young and handsome wife whom I love with all the tenderness of our first happy days; I have children, scarcely out of the cradle, to bring up, to protect, and to love for yet a length of time.

They agree upon the nature of the defence.

All these things attach, and still bind me to existence, more than I myself desire it; all these affections are ties which bind the heart much stronger than reason approves of, and independently of our own will; for I live in these dear beings, they live in me, and it is thus their existence which cries out and tortures itself prematurely with mine! I confess to you, therefore, without shame and without weakness, that although resigned to death I am desirous of living! Defend my life, therefore, if you think you can defend it, and by every legal means by which you can protect it from my enemies!"

"But," he resumed, with the gesture of a man of honour who rejects all baseness, "do not defend it at every price! No, not life itself at every price; neither for my own sake, nor that of my name, nor for my wife, nor for my children, shall my life be purchased by the slightest dishonour! You now," he added, "know all my thoughts; life, if it can be preserved with honour, but death rather than a life which might hereafter tarnish with a second stain my character and my memory! It is therefore for you, more calm and more experienced than I am, in the study of law-courts, to read the thoughts of my judges in the expression of their features; and if, after having tried all proper means of saving my life, you see at the last moment that my cause is desperate, and that my condemnation is determined on in their minds, apprise me of it that I may fall nobly before them and before posterity! I confide to you my name and my memory! Watch over them for me, and like considerate doctors who are not afraid of acquainting their dying patient with his danger, that he may prepare his soul for death, apprise me unhesitatingly at the proper moment, of what I ought to do, and what I ought to say, that I may take a becoming leave of hope and life!"

His defenders promised him to do so, and now the fatal moment foreseen by the marshal had arrived. They had exhausted every means of delay, and every appeal to feeling, which such a cause would naturally suggest, but all had failed in convincing or softening the resolution of the judges. Their countenances, their looks, their murmurs, or their silence evidently signified a condemnation already come to in their hearts. M.

Final effects of the defence.

Dupin, the marshal's defender, leaning towards his client, said to him in a low voice: "This is the moment! Every hope is lost! You have now only to render your death illustrious, and to save your memory by falling nobly and patriotically before your country!" "I understand you," replied the marshal: then feigning a desire to breathe a little fresh air and to take some repose, he went out accompanied by his two defenders, to concert with them his demeanour and language. They confirmed to him with a painful but necessary frankness, the inflexibility of the peers, and the certainty of the sentence. "But we have reserved for you," said M. Dupin, "a means of intervening yourself, by some last and noble words, in the catastrophe of your trial and your life. We shall return to the court, and I shall ask to defend you in my turn. I shall begin by pleading your privilege as a foreigner to France, which removes you from its judgment, by your birth at *Sarrelouis*, a city now disjoined from our territory. At my first words indicating an intention of shielding you thus, in your quality of a foreigner, you will rise, and interrupt me with a burst of indignation, and an impulse of patriotism, which you have no occasion to feign; and you will interdict me from seeking to save your life, at the price of abdicating your glorious nationality!"

The marshal thanked his defenders, and concerted with them the few words he had to utter, on interrupting M. Dupin, and reclaiming his country. He wrote them on a sheet of paper, that the interest of the drama might not blot them from his memory, and he rolled it between his fingers like one of those notes which orators hastily scribble to remind them of an idea.

They then returned into court, and the prisoner's counsel rose to speak. M. Berryer, sen., in his speech exonerated his client, not from his faults, but from premeditated treason. His speech strengthened by all the evidence which had been heard in the preceding sittings, left no doubts with any who were not influenced by hatred or prejudice. M. Dupin then rising after his colleague, affected an intention of snatching the marshal from the vengeance of France, by maintaining that he was no longer a Frenchman, since he was born at *Sarrelouis*, and that

Their rejection by Ney.

the treaties of 1815 had taken away that city from the French territory. The marshal then, as if impelled by noble shame at hearing this sophism pleaded, which to save him from the scaffold would rob him of his country, started suddenly up to claim his birth-right and to protest against this too zealous defence. "No, Sir, I am a Frenchman," he cried, placing his hand on his breast; "and I know how to die like a Frenchman. I thank my generous defenders for what they have done, and what they would wish to do, but I beg of them to cease to defend me rather than to do it imperfectly. I rather wish not to be defended at all than to have only the shadow of a defence. I am tried contrary to the faith of treaties, and I am not permitted to invoke them! Like Moreau, I appeal from this to Europe and posterity!"

The emotion caused by this premeditated scene was immense. The suddenness, the accent, the gesture, and the look of the accused increased it beyond anything that had been foreseen in its preparation. Nature, as usual, surpassed all anticipation.

These words closed the pleadings. The accused was justly relieved from the refuge so unworthy of him which he had consented to seek in the capitulation of Paris, and under the auspices of the foreigner. His accuser moved that he should be declared guilty of high treason. The peers re-assembled with closed doors, to discuss amongst themselves the questions of conviction, of the nature of the crime, and the penalty attached to it. They numbered 161 voters. Some had absented themselves; others retired to avoid being implicated in an act for which they might now or hereafter be reproached, according to the passions of the moment, or of futurity. The young Duke de Broglie claimed the right of sitting from which he was dispensed by his youth, in order to protest by his vote against a political immolation as contrary to the gratitude and the honour of his country. Faithful in that to the noble sentiments of Madame de Staël, whose daughter he married, and who sanctified the genius of letters by the genius of pity.

The peers being divided on the charge of premeditation, and almost unanimous on the crime, and its qualification as to

Condemnation of Marshal Ney.

the crime of high treason; deliberated individually, and aloud, on the penalty. The tribunal not being military, but political it could appreciate all the circumstances, estimate the man, recall his services, foretell the odium of state ingratitude, arbitrate on reparation, graduate the punishment, and spare blood. Under the inspiration of humanity, and to ratify the policy and well-understood interest of the Bourbons, exile would have been the most appropriate penalty for a crime occasioned by sudden impulse; but to throw at the army, as it were, the head of its most gallant and popular chief, was a defiance to all reconciliation, an implacable grievance planted in the hearts of brave men, almost all of them more or less accomplices in his crime. The guilty man himself confessed his fault, honoured the King, and raised no other standard than that of repentance and sorrow, in opposition to the standard of the Restoration. He was no longer dangerous but in an ensanguined tomb. His phantom alone was thenceforward to be dreaded; everything demanded that he should be reprov'd, but saved. Seventeen peers only, in this select body of the statesmen and courtiers of France, had the courage to refuse this victim to the fury of the times, and to vote for his exile. We here record their names, that public esteem may also have its tablets, in which history will find and award its meed of praise to those hearts which are inflexible to the passions or the calculations of parties. They were: The Duke de Broglie, the Duke de Montmorency, Bertholet, Chasseloup-Laubat, Chollet, Collaud, Fontanes, Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, Herwyn, Klein, Lanjuinais, Lemercier, Lenoir-Laroche, Malleville, Richebourg, Curial, Lally-Tollendal.

Five peers, Messrs. de Choiseul, de Saint Suzanne, de Brigode, Daligre, and de Nicolai, either less convinced or less courageous, abstained from voting. A humane, but timid neutrality which neither strikes nor saves, but which should never be permitted to stand between the sword and the victim.

As for those who voted in a mass for death, some from a conscientious conviction of the proportion of the penalty to the crime, others from a short sighted feeling of the necessity of the example; many from devotion to a cause to which they could refuse nothing—not even the head of a hero—and several

Efforts to save his life.

through zealous emulation, and as a pledge of their suspected and recent royalism; the cruel through vengeance, the cowardly through weakness, the flatterers from adulation, the ambitious through anticipation of the benefits to be derived from this sacrifice to servility; we conceal their names from respect to their memories and consideration to their families. Posterity should have its amnesties as well as policy; the annals of nations are not a perpetual index of resentments and divisions between the children of those parents who were either culpable or unfortunate. To pardon the victims and to pardon even the judges, is the law of true justice for beings so fallible as we are. To pardon is to forget. Let us forget!

XVII.

It must be said, in extenuation of these hundred and thirty peers who pronounced sentence of death, that, in the opinions of many, death was but a nominal satisfaction given to the rigour of their conviction, but that they voted it under the tacit condition of a commutation of the penalty by the government. "The sentence," says M. de Vaulabelle, the most exact historian and the most severe against this vote, "was scarcely pronounced, when the Duke de Richelieu, who attended this nocturnal sitting, was surrounded by a great number of the voters, who conjured him to solicit from the King exile to America for the condemned, instead of the scaffold."

The Duke de Richelieu's heart was great enough to comprise at once both justice and clemency. Whilst the judges, still shut up in the Luxembourg, were communicating to each other in an under tone those observations which result from great acts accomplished by public assemblies, some expecting inflexibility, and others a softening of the anger of the court, the prime minister had hastened to the Tuileries to implore the man after having served the prince. The King was mild by nature, and magnanimous by calculation. His long study of human vicissitudes in history, which teaches the inutility of executions as much as the deceptions of benefits, had imbrued the mind of this prince with a philosophy which resembled in-

Efforts of Madame Hutchinson to save Ney.

difference. He did not hate because he loved but little; but he governed generally with a view to posterity. He cited Henri IV. and aspired to imitate him; he wished not at any price to leave a sinister memory to futurity. If he had been solely and truly King he would certainly have pardoned; but although he affected independence in his government, and a disdainful superiority over his family in his palace, he felt himself accountable to his allies, and he yielded to the opinions of those around him. The representatives of the great powers, and above all, the Duke of Wellington, might have encouraged his inward disposition to clemency, but influenced unknown to themselves, by the ultra-royalist portion of the society of Paris by which they were surrounded, they were involuntarily implicated in its passions.

XVIII.

The English nation was not an accomplice on this occasion, either in this apathy, or this tacit approbation of a military execution, which soldiers might look upon as just, but generous hearts found cruel. Madame Hutchinson, the wife of a member of parliament, and a relation of the Duke of Wellington, who was then in Paris, and whose house was the hospitable rendezvous of the most liberal-minded officers of the English army, interceded in the most earnest manner with His Grace to obtain from him a decisive intervention for the salvation of Marshal Ney. She conjured him, by his own glory and the glory of his country, to avert, by such a step, the reproach which would rest on his memory if this odious sacrifice were accomplished under his eyes, and apparently with his moral participation. It is even said that, in her ardent and eloquent appeal to the magnanimity of the English general, Madame Hutchinson threw herself at the feet of the Duke, to draw from him by her prayers what she could not obtain by higher considerations. Evidently wavering between his wish to yield to so touching a solicitation, and the impossibility in which he felt himself of pressing upon the free decision of the King, and thus perhaps violating preliminary engagements of neutrality between this prince and his subjects, contracted in

Intercession of Madame Hutchinson.

correspondence or private interviews during the campaign, the Duke replied that his hands were tied by imperative considerations, and that whatever might be his personal sentiments of interest and commiseration for an unfortunate adversary, his duty was to be silent, to despise the false judgment of the times on his character, and to leave all to the more enlightened and impartial verdict of posterity.

Madame Hutchinson retired in tears, without being able to move either the statesman or the soldier. Meanwhile, the government being informed of her endeavours to snatch the prey from the vengeance of the law, and of the bitter reproaches she had uttered in her private circle against the implacability of the judges, removed her from Paris, under the charge of also having pitied the fate of Lavalette, and of having contrived in her house the generous plot for his escape. Affected by the efforts of this lady to save a husband and a father for his afflicted family, Marshal Ney's widow presented to Madame Hutchinson, as an offering of the heart, the sabre worn by the Marshal at Waterloo, having had engraved upon the blade a record of the generous act and the gratitude it inspired.

Twenty years after these sad events, a son of the victim when travelling in Italy, to look for some traces of his father in that country, on arriving at Leghorn, stopped at a villa inhabited by Madame Brennier, the wife of the French consul in Tuscany; where the conversation having fallen on the death of the marshal, the young man was astonished to see tears rolling down the cheeks of a strange lady at the recital of his family misfortunes. The stranger was Madame Hutchinson, the mother of Madame Brennier. Pity and gratitude had thus met together without knowing each other. If cruelty has its expiations and its remorse, generosity has its chances and its turns of good fortune; as if Providence reserved them for fitting occasions, that noble hearts may not be discouraged.

XIX.

The passions of the court at this moment in Paris were implacable. To spare the life of the hero of the Beresina

Vindictive feeling of the royalists.

seemed a larceny committed on the right of reprisals. In the saloons of the aristocracy the King's ministers were actually mobbed and entreated to give his blood as a personal favour to the applicants. Ladies of the highest rank, young, beautiful, rich, loaded with gifts, favours, titles, and court dignities, forgot their families, their ease, and their amours, quitted their houses at daybreak, ran about all day, and intrigued all night, to gain over a voice amongst the judges from the side of indulgence, and to win one to the side of punishment; to imprecate and accuse beforehand those whose cowardice or perfidy might withhold this condemnation from their wishes. We have ourselves seen with astonishment and sorrow the supplications, the clasping of hands, the smiles of these ladies, begging those concessions, which they implored for the satisfaction of their hatred. We still blush at the recollection. Who can be astonished at the brutal ferocity of the multitude, when rank, fortune, and even courts, display such thoughtless inhumanity, such paroxysms of anger, such horrid thirst of blood in their days of vengeance?

XX.

All these vindictive proceedings of the royalist society had their counterparts amongst the inhabitants of the Tuileries. Those around the princes thought they flattered them in hardening their hearts by this bitterness of hatred against the common enemy; while the princes promised beforehand to be inexorable, and to correspond with this devotion of their friends by the sacrifice of every human weakness in their own hearts. These promises being made, the blood demanded could not be refused.

Such were the dispositions of the court and of the princes, when the Duke de Richelieu, infringing the regulations, and entering the King's chamber at one o'clock in the morning, acquainted him with the judgment of the Chamber of Peers, and pleaded for mercy. "My family would never forgive me for this pardon," replied the King sadly; "and the Chamber, without which I cannot reign, would dissolve my government

Impolicy of the rigour of the Bourbons.

to-morrow. The allies themselves would accuse me of again compromising the security of Europe by an indulgence, of which I should have the honour and they the danger. There are circumstances in which kings can only do what their partisans permit them. Our feelings even are subservient to our duties of state. I pity Ney, I have no hatred against him. I would gladly preserve a father to his children, a hero to France; but I am a constitutional king; I cannot, without compromising my union with the Chambers, suspend, or turn aside the justice which my people require as a pledge of their security." The Duke de Richelieu, who knew the dispositions, and the requirements of the court, of the Chamber, and of the followers of the princes and the princesses, had no further hope from this source. The Duchess d'Angoulême could alone have taken upon her the anger of the royalist party, and cast her tears into the balance against the blood of the hero. The King, her uncle, could refuse nothing to such a suppliant. Perhaps he anxiously wished that she should come and offer this pretext for his clemency, this family authority for his weakness. But she came not; fatal counsels of severity prevailed around her, over the natural part which Providence seemed to have assigned to her. A woman's heart at the Tuileries interposed against all these reprisals, and the asylum of all the vanquished, was the only popularity which the Bourbons wanted to conquer all parties. She allowed this heart to be closed by the hand of her fatal counsellors: that of France closed in its turn. She thus deprived her family, her cause, and herself of the most irresistible of policies, the policy of feeling. It was more than a harshness, it was an error which condemned her dynasty to a short existence. For, restorations by their nature have only one of these parts to play, magnanimity or vengeance. From the day they cease to pardon, they are condemned to avenge. To avenge themselves on a nation is to forfeit its affection without crushing it. With the blood which they thus shed at the Restoration, was written beforehand the second divorce of France and the Bourbons.

Ney in his prison.

XXI.

Whilst death or pardon were thus on the balance within the shadow of the palace, and the prime minister was leaving it in consternation without bearing with him the slightest hope, the condemned marshal had returned to his prison in the Luxembourg, whence he could hear in low murmurs the conversation of the judges, themselves awaiting the decision of the King. Uncertain, and almost indifferent, from weariness and grief, as to his fate, the marshal had taken a little nourishment, and had lain down in his clothes, as a soldier who expects to be aroused by death. The excess of fatigue and agitation of mind since the commencement of this long trial, had at length closed his eyes as soon as his honour and his life had been placed in the hands of his judges. The sleep which is disturbed by hope is the companion of despair. He slept on the confines of destiny. The considerate and compassionate guards who watched in his chamber, restrained their words, and even their respiration, for fear of interrupting this last repose. These were not, as it has been said, myrmidons disguised as gendarmes, and chosen for the ferocity and the rudeness of their enmity, from amongst the King's guard, to torture the soul of the prisoner, and to kill him in the event of any attempt to escape. They were, on the contrary, brave young gentlemen, the *élites* of their companies, incorruptible in their honour, and incapable of any outrage on an unarmed man, and especially on a captive, whose fate they deplored, as they admired his glory. Although they were officers they wore the uniform of simple grenadier dragoons of the Royal Guard. Under this costume, though mixed up with the gendarmes, and other attendants of the prisoner, it was they alone who watched him in his chamber, and who were most accustomed to converse with him, not to aggravate, but to amuse and console his solitude. They encouraged him with hope, and they themselves anticipated that the marshal, condemned and pardoned by the King, would recognise them in happier times as the consolers

His sentence is communicated to him.

of his evil days. It was from their own mouths that we received at the time this confidential account of their mission.

XXII.

At three o'clock in the morning the secretary of the Chamber of Peers appeared at the door of the prisoner's cell, to read his sentence to him officially. The guards, regretting the necessity of interrupting that peaceful sleep, which death, as if jealous of the short repose, was about to disturb so rudely, hesitated for a long time to awake him. They at length, however, obeyed, and touching the marshal's hand called him with a low voice. Though in a profound sleep he sat up quickly, and perceived the officials of the Chamber, and the secretary, M. Cauchy, whose features, which were known to him, indicated the sorrow and pity that disturbed his mind. The marshal immediately got out of bed, advanced towards M. Cauchy, and prepared to listen to a sentence too well foreseen. Before he read the paper he held in his hand, the secretary begged the prisoner to separate his official duty from the personal sentiments of respect and admiration with which he was penetrated, and to pity him for having to perform a duty which was repugnant to his heart. "I am grateful Sir," replied the marshal, "and touched by the sentiments you express, which I fully comprehend. But we all have our duties in this world; fulfil yours, I shall perform mine." Then pointing to the paper he held in his hand "Read, Sir," he said with a resigned and gentle accent. The secretary accordingly began, in a voice which seemed to ask pardon for the words; and as he read conscientiously, word for word, the long enumeration of the names, titles, rank, and dignities by which the sentence designated the condemned: "To the fact, to the fact," said the marshal, with an accent of impatience, and an expression of disdain for these baubles of a life on the point of extinction: "say simply Michael Ney and soon a little dust!"

The reading having terminated, the secretary of the Chamber informed the condemned that the curate of St. Sulpice had

Interview between Marshal Ney and his family.

come to offer him the consolations which religion gives to the dying, and that he was authorized by the regulations to receive him. "I want no one to teach me how to die," replied the marshal. "At what hour to-morrow?" he added, with an interrogative expression of countenance which finished the suspended sense of the question. "At nine o'clock," replied M. Cauchy, bowing, as if ashamed of the brevity of the time doled out to him for his preparation. "And my wife and children?" said the condemned; "can I, at least, embrace them for the last time?" This, M. Cauchy was authorized to promise him. "Well, then," said Ney, "let my wife come at five in the morning; but keep her ignorant, above all things, of my condemnation: let her learn it only from myself who alone can soften its horrors to her." He was promised that this precaution should be taken with his family; and he then begged to be left alone for the remainder of the night. He lay down again on his bed, wrapped his cloak around his head, and fell asleep, as if on the bivouac and ready for action. Nature, more merciful than his judges, veiled from him his agony in sleep.

At five o'clock Madame Ney, accompanied by her sister and her four sons, was introduced into his prison. The period fixed for this interview sufficiently indicated that it was one of final separation. The marshal who adored this young and charming companion of his happy days, received her fainting in his arms, and with difficulty restored her with his tears and kisses. Then taking his four young sons upon his knees, and pressing them to his heart, he uttered to them in a low voice those last sad words by which a father transfuses the purest portion of his soul into the memory of his children. His sister-in-law anxiously endeavoured to console by turns the father, the mother and the children, and prayed aloud amidst the sobbing of these hapless groups. The marshal who had solaced his heart with the sight and farewell endearments of all that he loved upon earth, maintained sufficient coolness to deceive his wife and withdraw her from the agony of his last moments, by imparting a hope to her which he did not feel himself. He flattered her with the idea that the heart of the

King might still be overcome by the sight of her grief and the energy of her prayers. He thus succeeded in withdrawing himself from her arms; and the suppliants were conducted amidst the darkness to the gates of the palace where the King and the Duchess of Angoulême were still sleeping.

By the favour of the Duke de Duras, first gentleman of the King, the family were admitted into the anti-rooms of the royal apartments, where Madame Ney, uneasy, but still confiding, awaited the monarch's rising. She did not doubt that even the permission to weep so near their hearts was a tacit promise of mercy. The first light and noises of day, penetrating into the palace impressed her with mingled feelings of hope and terror. Her mother had been in friendly intercourse with the mother of the Duchess of Angoulême. Would the daughter of Maria Antoinette allow the widowed daughter, and the little orphan boys, to leave that palace where she was more than queen. This hapless group waited in the anti-chamber in vain until the irreparable hour had elapsed. The princess had known or heard nothing of it. What an hour lost for nature and the Monarchy!

XXIII.

The marshal had not lain down again after the last embraces of his wife, and sobbing of his children. He had dried up his own tears, that he might no longer think of anything but the dignity of his death. He wrote his will; then rising from his chair he walked about his chamber, exchanging with great composure a few words with his guardians. One of these royal body-guards, disguised as grenadiers, of whom we have spoken, had conceived for the hero that involuntary tenderness of admiration and pity which the familiarity of a prison, misfortune, and approaching death create in noble hearts. This was a royalist gentleman of Dauphiny, named M. de V—. His hard-some countenance, his martial character, his accent of free but respectful frankness had deceived the prisoner himself, who thought he saw in M. de V— one of the old sub-officers of his great campaigns. He gladly conversed with

Ney's last moments in prison.

this guard during the long hours of his weary captivity. "This is the last sun I shall ever see, comrade," said he, approaching M. de V——. "This world is at an end for me. This evening I shall lie in another bivouac. I am no woman, but I believe in God and in another life, and I feel that I have an immortal soul: they spoke to me of preparation for death, of the consolations of religion, of conferring with a pious priest. Is that the death of a soldier? Let me hear what you would do in my place. "*Monsieur le Maréchal*," replied M. de V——, "we still hope that the King will be worthy of Henri IV., and that he will not suffer France to be deprived of one of her most glorious servants, for one day of forgetfulness: but death is death for all mankind, and he who has seen it so near on so many battle-fields is not afraid to hear it spoken of in a dungeon. The voice of a last friend has never been painful to a soldier in the hospital waggon. Were I in your place I should allow the curate of St. Sulpice to enter, and I should prepare my soul for every event." "I believe you are right," replied the marshal with a friendly smile. "Well then, let the priest come in." The curate of St. Sulpice who was patiently waiting the favourable moment in a room of the Luxembourg, was introduced, and conferred piously with the marshal in a corner of the chamber. The hour which brought no pardon at length sounded for the execution. The prisoner who had read in the features, and heard in the murmurs of the Chamber of Peers, the inexorable vengeance of party spirit, had expected nothing from the tears of his wife and children. It was for her sake and theirs that he had affected to hope. He dressed himself, therefore, to appear with propriety before the last fire he was ever to face. He wore a military frock coat on the occasion. The noise of the troops, who were stationed from the gate of the Luxembourg to the railing of the avenue of the Observatory, and the rolling of a carriage in the court-yard apprised him of the hour of departure and the route. He thought he was to be conducted to the plain of Grenelle, to the spot marked by the blood of Labeoyère, the ordinary place of execution. His door opened; he understood the sign. He descended with a firm step, a

He proceeds to execution.

serene brow, and a lofty look, his lips almost wearing a smile, but without any theatrical affectation, through the double ranks of the troops drawn up on the steps of the staircase, and in the vestibule of the palace, like a man happy once more to see the uniform, the arms and the troops—his old family. On arriving at the bottom of the flight of steps where the carriage awaited him with the door open, he stopped instead of mounting, through politeness to the priest who accompanied him, and who was yielding him the precedence. Taking the curate by the arm, "No, no," said he, with a manner at once playful and sad, in melancholy allusion to the object of his journey, "Go in first, Mr. Curate; I shall still arrive above there before you;" indicating with a look the haven of his rest.

XXIV.

The carriage proceeded at a foot pace through the broad alleys of the Luxembourg, and between the silent ranks of the soldiers. An icy fog crept along the ground, yielding only glimpses of the leafless branches of the lofty trees in the royal garden. The priest murmured by the side of the soldier spiritual consolation and resignation to death. The marshal listened to him with manly attention, and expected to listen still longer, when the carriage suddenly stopped, midway between the railing of the Luxembourg and the Observatory, in front of a long wall of a black and fetid enclosure, that bordered an alley leading out of the avenue. The government, ill-advised even in the choice of a place of execution, seemed desirous of rendering it more abject and contemptuous, by striking down this illustrious enemy like some unclean animal, on a cross road, and at a few paces from a palace, the name of which will for ever be stained by the memory of so foul a deed.

Néy was astonished, and looked around for the cause of this halt half-way, as he supposed, when the carriage door opened, and he was requested to alight. He felt that he was never to return, and gave to the priest who accompanied him the few articles he had about him, with his last remembrances to his family. He emptied his pockets also of some pieces of

Ney's execution.

gold for the poor of the parish; he then embraced the priest, the last friend who supplies the place of all absent friends at this final hour, and marched to the wall towards the place indicated by a platoon of veterans. The officer commanding the party advanced towards him, and requested permission to bandage his eyes. "Do you not know," replied the soldier, "that for twenty-five years I have been accustomed to look balls and bullets in the face?" The officer disturbed, hesitating, undecided, expecting perhaps a cry of pardon, or fearing to commit a sacrilege of glory by firing on his general, stood mute between the hero and his platoon. The Marshal availed himself of this hesitation, and of the immobility of the soldiers to cast a final reproach upon his destiny. "I protest before God and my country," he exclaimed, "against the sentence which has condemned me. I appeal from it to man, to posterity, to God!"

These words and the countenance, enshrined in their memory, of the hero of the camp, shook the steadiness of the soldiers. "Do your duty," cried the commandant of Paris to the officer who was more confused than the victim. The officer stumbling resumed his place beside his party. Ney advanced a few paces, raised his hat with his left hand, as he was accustomed to elevate it in desperate charges to animate his troops. He placed his right hand on his breast to mark well the seat of life to his murderers. "Soldiers!" said he, "aim right at the heart!" The party absolved by his voice and commanded by his gesture, fired, as one man. A single report was heard: Ney fell as if struck with a thunder-bolt, without a convulsion, and without a sigh. Thirteen balls had pierced the bust, and shattered the heart of the hero, and mutilated the right arm which had so often waved the sword of France. The soldiers, the officers, and the spectators, turned away their eyes from the body, as from the evidence of a crime. During the quarter of an hour which the military regulations required that the corpse should lie exposed upon the place of execution, no spectators, except a few passers-by and some women from the neighbouring houses, looked upon the body, or mingled their tears with its blood. Some groups

Public opinion on Ney's execution.

demanded with a low voice, who the criminal was, thus abandoned on the public highway, and shot to death by soldiers of the grand army. None had the courage to reply that it was the body of the "bravest of the brave," the hero of the Beresina. After the legal period of exposure, the hospitable sisters of a neighbouring convent claimed the body to bestow funeral honours upon it in private, had it carried to their chapel, and watched and prayed alternately around the forlorn coffin.

XXV.

When the Parisians awoke and found that Ney had been executed, bitter shame seized upon every soul. The court party stupidly rejoiced at being revenged. But for one heroic enemy, disarmed and repentant, whom they had immolated, they made thousands of new enemies amongst those who looked for an act of clemency called for by so many services rendered to the country, and so much fame acquired for France. A feeling more dangerous than anger, because it is more durable, smouldered in the hearts of impartial youth, of an outraged army, and of a grateful people. This was disgust for the pusillanimity of that court which had never fought, and which allowed to be shed in its cause such popular and glorious blood, as a libation to the foreigner, on a soil still trampled under the feet of our enemies.

We must, however, say, in the defence of the King, of the ministers, and of the immense mass of the royalists, that they were repugnant from moderation, from honour, and from sensibility, to this useless, cruel, and shameful sacrifice. In their eyes, and in those of the impartial portion of the world, Ney was a great culprit; but his was a glorious life. His fault was amongst those which are condemned but pardoned: he had stumbled in his weakness, not through premeditation. He tried and condemned himself. He had redeemed beforehand his military crime, by exploits which will be an eternal theme in the camps of France. As a political chief he was no longer to be dreaded. To save him would not be to save a factious man but a soldier. The amnesty which it was indispensable

to throw over the army could not find a nobler opportunity than this. Henri IV. would have embraced him who was slaughtered by his descendants. How often since have they not lamented this fatal yielding to the vindictive passions of their Court and their Chamber, which ordered them to do this murder! What a power of popularity would they not have derived against the opposition, in the critical days of their dynasty, from this plebeian blood spared and reserved for the country; this arm regained by magnanimity to their cause! Though insulted for a few days in the privacy of their palace by the cowardly counsellors of abject fear, they would have been avenged and adopted by the people, who only recognise the greatness of royal races by their greatness of soul. They would have fallen perhaps at the destined hour, but history would not have this reproach to cast upon their memory, and instead of a stain of blood upon their reign there would have been, in conjunction with the name of Ney a tear of admiration. Instead of commanding as kings they obeyed as slaves. The court was cruel, the King weak, the ministers complaisant, the Chamber of Deputies implacable, Europe goading, the Chamber of Peers cowardly as a senate in the fallen days of Rome. Let each of these bear a part in the murder of the hero, France disclaims the deed.

BOOK THIRTY-FIFTH.

Animosities of parties—Impassioned reaction in the departments: prevotal courts—Debates on the amnesty law: Messrs. Royer-Collard de Labourdonnaie, Chateaubriand—Production of the will of Maria Antoinette—Relaxation in the severity of public opinion—Dissolution of the Chamber—Agitation in the departments—Conspiracy of Grenoble—Didier: his character, previous life, his connection with the Orleans party—His abortive attempt on Grenoble—Proclamations and vengeance—Flight and courageous death of Didier—Palace intrigues: formation of the *Doctrinaire* party—The *Coup d'état* of the 5th of September, ratified by the elections—Fury of the ultra-royalists: their private note to the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle—Evacuation of France by the allies—Memoir by Louis XVIII. on the ministerial crisis (December, 1818).

I.

THE execution of Marshal Ney, instead of closing, as the King and the ministers had hoped, the era of proscriptions and reprisals, and satisfying the thirst for recriminations of the Court and Chambers only excited it still further. All France, encouraged to retaliation by the compliance of the government in yielding to its passions, instead of occupying itself with its deliverance, and its reconstruction, only appeared to occupy itself with its vengeance. The zeal for the Bourbons was commensurate with the wrath against, and the denunciations of their enemies. The prevotal courts, like a star chamber against acts and opinions, outvied each other in severity in the departments. The country was nothing but a vast military tribunal, judging, condemning, and too often immolating the pretended accomplices of the Bonapartist conspiracy. The most sinister motions were daily made in the Chamber of Deputies and the Chamber of Peers. The seduction was so irresistible and so general, that on the bitterest propositions scarcely two or three voices

Animosities of parties.

protested against these exaggerations of prudence, and against the madness of party zeal. The King felt that the reins of royalist opinion were eluding his grasp to pass into the hands of his brother, the Count d'Artois, and of his most violent counsellors, in more intimate connection than himself with the passions of the Chamber. For fear of losing all, he conceded a great deal, and then became himself alarmed at the concessions he had made. Accused in secret of having thrown his dynasty into exile by compounding before the 20th of March with the requirements of revolutionary opinion, and with the army of Bonaparte, he had to redeem in the eyes of his family, of the emigrants, and of the clergy, his pretended complaisance for the revolution. As a party chief suspected even by his own party, secretly undermined in his own palace by the violent and ambitious partizans of his brother, obliged to please them even while he restrained them, convinced at the same time that he could not secure his reign but by moderating his friends, and gaining over his enemies, by adopting the glory, and by founding the constitutional liberty of the nation, his situation in the midst of this tempest of conflicting passions, was that of a pilot who struggles at the same time with his own crew and with the raging elements. He deviated for a moment from his proper course under the influence of too strong a gale, intending to resume it as soon as the fury of public opinion might allow the voice of sound policy to be heard.

II.

In the meantime, he allowed the royalist committees of the departments to dictate and revoke the choice of his agents, to purify the ministry and the army, to draw up lists of those unworthy of serving in the army, to publish proclamations for mutual defence in the provinces of the south and west, to cause the assembling of armed parties, and to dismiss the civil judges from their irremovable functions, the guarantee of their independence. Imperative addresses, under the semblance of devotion to the King, called upon him, in the name of the two Chambers, for efficacious measures of foresight and

Reaction in the Departments.

severity. His ministers obeyed these impulses. The Duke de Feltre dismissed a great number of those officers who had served during the hundred days. Barbé-Marbois, minister of Justice, promulgated a code prohibiting seditious manifestations; M. Decazes, Minister of Police, proclaimed a suspension of individual liberty, which gave the government arbitrary power over the citizens. The ministers, in supporting these measures in the two chambers, had only to defend them against excessive punishment, and against the penalty of death, which the orators of the vengeance party invoked on every occasion. M. Pasquier, for a long time administrator of the police of the capital under Bonaparte, was now in the tribune the most devoted adherent of the Bourbons. M. de Chateaubriand carried his enthusiasm even to the insulting of the vanquished and the glorification of the conqueror. One of those men who constitute themselves the dominant voices in the chorus of political passions, M. de Labourdonnaye drew up, under the false name of amnesty, a graduated table of proscription, which included the names of 1,200 persons condemned to exile or to capital accusations. Other lists, more or less vindictive, were drawn up by other deputies of the same faction. Proscriptions were no longer made out with reference to the men or the crime, but according to the category and the situation. The Chamber applauded these initiatory measures; it named committees of deputies to draw them up in proper form, and to enlarge and extend their powers. The government, which was tacitly accused by these motions of tardiness, hesitation, or complicity with the public perils, trembled to see itself out-done and abandoned by the Chambers, if it did not itself yield to this impetus, in order that it might still retain the power of moderating and directing it.

III.

It was thus that the Duke de Richelieu brought before the Chambers an amnesty bill. This law had a double object in the mind of the King: to quiet the alarms of the vanquished party, which might be driven to revolt by despair, and to

The Amnesty law.

satisfy the requirements of the party of the Chamber and of the Court, by depriving it of the pretence of impunity accorded to the opposite party. Louis XVIII. in this amnesty bill proscribed only the members of the Bonaparte family; he generously kept the promise of pardon to the regicides which his brother Louis XVI. had made them in his will. This magnanimity of the dying monarch, to which death itself imparted a religious character, made the advocates of retaliation in the two Chambers tremble with anger, but prevented them from murmuring aloud. In rebelling against the clemency of the King they were afraid of impugning the sanctity of the victim. The Chamber of Deputies nevertheless referred the proposition of the ministers to the same committee that was drawing up M. de Labourdonnaye's law of proscription. This was to prejudice the enlargement of the government bill, and to evince a contempt for the royal will. M. de Corbière and M. de Villèle, two men whose various talents, intimate alliance, and common loyalty, had already given them a predominance in the assembly, governed the opinions of this committee. M. de Villèle, more experienced and flexible; M. de Corbière, more collected and undaunted. The latter was charged to bear to the tribune the resolutions of the committee. "Henri IV., it is true," said he, "had granted an amnesty to his enemies, but five years of exile and condemnation had preceded the royal clemency." He then read the code of purification, banishment, and confiscation, under pain of death, which the committee had substituted for the amnesty of the King. The discussion alone of this counter-project was a defiance to government under the mask of zeal. The royalist orators aggravated this defiance by the bitterness of their speeches. "Do not listen to these sophisms of impetunate philanthropy, so ingenious in the mouths of your enemies. To hesitate to punish is weakness," said one speaker. "Divine Providence," said M. de Labourdonnaye, "has at length delivered into our hands the murderers of your kings, the assassins of your families, as if Supreme justice had preserved them, amidst all our disasters, to show the vanity of human prudence and the perfidy of remorseless

hearts! These men, now vanquished and disarmed, invoke a generosity which they have themselves never practised; as if crimes should enjoy an eternal impunity. And you pusillanimous magistrates, legislators without foresight! you would witness the plots of these men, the opprobrium of the nation, and you would not punish them!" M. de Bouville, a man of the same disposition and the same creed, accused the committee itself of timidity and weakness. "I should like to know," said he, "what excuse can obliterate the crime of those administrators, and of those generals, who, holding their functions from the hands of the King, have turned them against him and placed them at the service of the usurper!" These furious expressions were applauded as maxims of statesmen in the Chambers, in the tribunes, in the journals, in the saloons, and even in the palace. A few men of elevated views, cool judgment, and incorruptible by the contagion of party rancour,—at the head of whom ventured to show themselves M. Royer-Collard, a political philosopher; M. Lainé, whose soul was calm in its greatness; M. de Serre, an orator destined to acquire a distinguished reputation,—combated this excess of zeal; these *souvenirs* of the most evil days. "The confiscations you demand, under the name of indemnity from the guilty," said M. Royer Collard, "are the soul and the nerve of revolution; after having confiscated, because you have condemned, you condemn in order to confiscate. Ferocity may be satiated, but cupidity never. Confiscations are so odious, that they excited even the blushes of the revolution, which never blushed for anything. Moreover the great culprits (Ney and Labédoyère), have already suffered capital punishment: will you make an *ex post facto* law to act against them? bring them from their tombs, that they may hear from the mouths of their judges this new act of condemnation, which had not before been pronounced upon them."

Murmurs, groans of anger, of impatience for expiation and for ruin, responded from amidst the majority to these words of humanity and peace. M. de Corbière passionately contradicted these eternal truths. The Assembly, deaf to the voices of the ministers, was about to reject the government measure, and to

Proscription is voted against the regicides.

pass its own. The ministers, seeing the imminence of the danger, hastened to the palace in order to prevent it, and to obtain from the King a compromise between his clemency and the rigour of the Chamber. They returned an hour afterwards with an amnesty less comprehensive, but which still included the regicides. "It is not upon the earth," said the Duke de Richelieu, "that you must seek the motives which prevent the King from expelling them for ever from the kingdom, it is in heaven, it is in the wish of the martyred King, who will be consoled in his tomb by the pardon which you accord in his name!" These affecting words imposed silence, but not conviction. Political passions divested themselves even of all sense of propriety. M. de Trinquelague demanded that the laws and the penalties might not apply to the royalist bands which were overwhelming the south with confusion and blood shed. The classification of culprits by M. de Labourdonnaie, became law. M. de Clausel de Coussergues justified the confiscations by the example of St. Louis and Henri IV. "Let the treasury be poor, but honest!" cried M. de Serres. M. de Béthisy insisted, in spite of the pious repugnance of the King, upon the proscription of all the regicides. "Let us do violence to his clemency," said he in a speech coldly read in the tribune, but burning with zeal for the expulsion; "if inflexible honour compels us to disobey his wishes, if he turns away from us for a moment his look of goodness, let us say like the noble soldiers of the altar and throne, in the west, *'Vive le Roi quand même!'*"

This harangue, evidently concerted with the immense majority of the Chamber, and which veiled obstinacy under an appearance of respect, was received with unanimous applause. The ministers themselves yielded the point to public animosity, and held their peace. The proscription was voted.

M. de Chateaubriand, in the Chamber of Peers, demanded a funeral expiation for Louis XVII., the young king slowly tortured to death in soul and body by his executioners. The political theatre was felt even upon the tomb of this poor orphan. "Behold," cried M. de Chateaubriand, addressing in his turn his imprecation against the proscribed, "these are

Production of the will of Maria-Antoinette.

crimes which men can never sufficiently expiate! Maledictions on the villains who compel us to so many vain reparations. France, at length, casts them off. Justice has resumed her sway; crime has ceased to be inviolable!"

IV.

At this period, the will of the Queen, Maria-Antoinette, till then unknown, issued from the obscurity in which it had been buried. A moderate member of the convention, named Courtois, charged, after the death of Robespierre, with the examination of his papers, had found this will in the portfolio of the Dictator, and had buried it in the ground, with the pious motive of one day restoring it to history and her family. Courtois, now banished as a regicide, had allowed his secret to transpire. The will, which was brought to Louis XVIII. by M. Decazes, was a monument too opportune, and of too affecting a nature, that this prince should not make of it an era in his restoration, and an explosion of sentiment for his cause. Before the catastrophe of the monarchy, and the calamities of Maria-Antoinette, Louis XVIII., then Count of Provence, had but little political consideration for his sister-in-law, who was accused, and with too much reason, of inclining the virtuous Louis XVI. at times to too much resistance, at others to too many concessions; like a true woman, influenced one day by boldness, and another by dejection. But the fire of martyrdom had purified everything in the victim. Her devotion in calamity, her union with her husband even in death, her anguish for her children, the captivity she suffered, her piety divided, her adieus received, her courage elevated in the presence of her executioners, her judgment accepted, her blood offered to heaven and earth in expiation of some errors of government, had deified her memory in the mind of the King. He wished also to deify it politically in the eyes of renovated France, in order to surround his race with a crown of sacred recollections, inviolable to revolutionary sarcasms. He directed M. Decazes to communicate this royal relic to the Chamber of Deputies. He hoped that the enthusiasm and the

M. Decazes reads Maria-Antoinette's will to the Chamber of Deputies.

tears of his young minister in reading this letter, dated, as it were, from another world, would soften the rising anger of the royalists against his favourite, and would re-establish harmony between the Assembly and his Council. M. Decazes, who himself was anxious to acquire that consideration amongst the royalists which his youth had not yet given him, hastened to the Chamber with this letter of the queen in his hand, like a man who could not retain a mystery, and read it, powerfully affected himself, amidst the deep emotion of the auditory.

V.

The queen's letter, written to her sister, Madame Elizabeth, and dated from her dungeon in the Conciergerie, at four o'clock in the morning of the day of which she was destined never to see the close, was worthy of the victim, of the hour of execution, of posterity, and of heaven. Death inspires better than life, because it transforms before it strikes.

"It is to you, my sister," said the queen, "that I write for the last time. I have been condemned, not to a shameful death, which is only for criminals, but to go and join your brother.

"As innocent as he was, I hope to show an equal firmness as he did in his last moments. I am as calm as those are whose conscience does not reproach them. I feel a deep regret at leaving my poor children; you know that I lived only in them, and in my good and tender sister: you, who through friendship, have sacrificed everything to be with us—in what a position do I leave you! I have learned from the pleadings even of the trial that my daughter was separated from you. Alas! poor child! I dare not write to her; she would not receive my letter: I do not even know if this will reach you.

"Receive here my benediction for them both. I hope some day when they will be grown up, they will be reunited with you, and enjoy the whole of your tender care. Let them both think on what I have never ceased to instil into them: that the principles and exact execution of their duties are the

Marie-Antoinette's last letter.

first foundation of life, and that their mutual confidence and friendship will constitute its happiness

“Let my daughter feel that at her age she ought always to assist her brother by the counsels which her friendship and experience, so much greater than his, may inspire her with. Let my son, in turn, render to his sister all the cares and all the services that friendship can inspire. Let them both, in short, understand that in whatever situation they may be they will never be truly happy but in their union. Let them see by our example how many consolations our friendship has given us amidst our calamities, and that we enjoy happiness doubly when we can share it with a friend. And where can we find dearer and more tender than in one's own family?”

“Let my son never forget the last words of his father, which I expressly repeat to him: let him never attempt to avenge our deaths.

“I must now speak to you of a matter very painful to my heart. I know how much sorrow this child must have caused you. Pardon him, my dear sister. Recollect at his age how easy it is to make a child say what he should not, and even what he does not comprehend.

“A day, I hope, will come, when he will only feel the better all the value of your goodness and tenderness for them both.

“It now only remains to confide to you my last thoughts. I should have wished to write them from the commencement of the trial; but, in addition to my not being permitted to write, the progress of it was so rapid that I have really not had time. I die in the Roman Catholic and apostolic religion, in that of my fathers, in which I have been brought up, and which I have always professed, having no spiritual consolation to expect, not knowing if there still exist any priests of this religion; and even the place in which I am would expose them too much if they were once to enter it.

“I sincerely ask pardon of God for all the faults that I may have committed during my life-time. I hope that in His goodness He will deign to receive my last prayers, as well as those I have made for a long time past, that He will receive my soul in His goodness and mercy.

Effect produced upon the Chamber by the reading of the letter.

"I ask pardon of all those that I know, and of you, my sister, in particular, for all the trouble which, unwittingly, I may have caused you. I pardon all my enemies the evil they have done me.

"I now say farewell to my aunts, and to all my brothers and sisters. I had some friends; the idea of being separated from them for ever, and of their sorrow, forms one of the greatest regrets I have in dying. Let them know, at least, that I have thought of them to my last moment.

"Farewell, my good and tender sister; may this letter reach you. Always think of me. I embrace you with all my heart, as well as my poor and dear children. My God! how fruitful it is to quit them for ever!

"Farewell! Farewell! I do not wish to think of anything more but my spiritual duties. As I am not free in my actions, a priest will, perhaps, be brought to me; but I here protest that I shall not speak a word to him, and that I shall treat him as a stranger."

VI

The mother's benediction contained in this letter rebounded from the scaffold upon her daughter and upon her race; the tears of the Assembly and of the people extinguished for a moment the fire that smouldered in the resentment of the royalists. M. de Marcellus, an enthusiastic orator, made an appeal to concord, to chivalrous self-devotion, and to antique faith. Expiatory monuments to the royal victims of the revolution were raised at his suggestion. Some saw in these monuments and anniversaries, reproaches against the nation, others considered them inoffensive proofs of national sorrow which remove in peaceful times the responsibility of times of irritation. The murder of a King, crushed like Louis XVI. beneath the irresistible crumbling of a system which he could not maintain, was to all, even to his judges, a day of lamentation. A nation that would blush to weep for deaths, especially those of the kings of its forefathers, and fallen by its own hand, would not perform an act of greatness of soul but of

The electoral law.

insensibility. Liberty does not inculcate indifference to human sorrow; it does not pluck out the hearts of the people: it elevates and enlarges them. To reproach Louis XVIII., the Count d'Artois, the brothers, or the daughter of Louis XVI., with the institution of funeral honours to their brother, to their father, and to their mother, would be to brand as a crime the piety and remembrance of the Bourbons. Wisdom only demanded the interdiction of funeral orations over their tombs, to prevent zeal for the dead from kindling controversy amongst the living. M. de Marcellus had felt this in his own heart, and had addressed the invocation to religion and peace. The jealous passions of the enemies of the Bourbons did not pardon him for this homage paid to the ashes of royalty and to the ruins of the old religion. They satirized even his candour, and devoted his name to ridicule and sarcasm in the pamphlets of the day.

VII.

A law of elections, the basis of all representative governments, was still wanting to the institutions. The fate of the future government was in this law. Several were sketched but none were finished. The triumphant aristocracy, and royalty trembling at the excessive zeal of its friends, equally feared to deceive themselves by restraining too much, or too much enlarging the rights of election. M. Lainé, president of the Assembly, expressed a wish to relinquish his functions, owing to an unpunished insult from one of the most vehement of the deputies, and conceiving this impunity to be an indication of personal dislike towards him on the part of the majority. Too moderate for those times of party rage, and too jealous of his dignity as chief of a sovereign assembly to submit to an outrage, M. Lainé deeply lamented the excesses of which he was a witness. The King's entreaty retained him a short time longer in the presidency. Louis XVIII., M. de Richelieu, and M. Decazes felt the value of such a man in the president's chair. They made a distant proposition to him to remove from the Home Department into the Council of Ministers, M. de

Progress of the reaction.

Vaublanc, whose encouragement of the violent majority pre-
saged his downfall.

During this long fermentation of the royalist party in the two Chambers, a party of the church, at first mixed up with the government party, afterwards separated from it, made a trial of its strength by speeches and motions for a temporal establishment for the dominant religion and a restoration of the church property. The state salaries to ministers of worship appeared an outrage to the partisans of an exclusive church. It was in vain that the government proposed to increase this salary, and to appropriate considerable funds for the payment of ecclesiastical pensions. The Chamber voted, in its munificence, the restitution of all the church property not yet alienated. The Constituent Assembly, when it abolished feudalism, had annihilated the nobility, and created the nation; in reforming the church as a proprietary body, the revolution of '89 had suppressed the temporal possessions of an established religion, and founded religious liberty. The tendency of the new and the religious party in the Chambers in restoring its still unsold possessions to the church as a civil body, was an evident return to a state religion. The King proscribed and restored, the natural ally of a proscribed and plundered church, neither dared to encourage or to repress these tendencies. The orators of the court and those of the clergy, M. de Chateaubriand, M. de Bonald, and M. de Marcellus, perpetually associated in their aspirations the throne and the altar. Already, on the motion of M. de Bonald, an able and venerated publicist, they had voted the abrogation of the law of divorce. The government had consented to remove it from the civil code, because it had been condemned by the church. Public education which, since the revolution, had been principally placed in the hands of an educational body called the University, was reclaimed exclusively for the church. They also loudly demanded that the registry of births and deaths should be confided to them, to the prejudice of the municipal authority, in order that the births and deaths, being legally made over to them, the people should look upon the priesthood as civil and religious magistrates, a double tie which

Closing of the Chambers and modification of the ministry.

would subject them to its power both in soul and body. They went so far as to demand the re-establishment of the infamous punishment of the gallows, and the odious judgment of hereditary opprobrium in the families of the executed. "Happy the people," cried a deputy from Brittany, "in whose families the stigma of crime descends from father to son!" Such was the delirium of a return to old times amongst men whose fathers had caused the revolution, or had perished upon its scaffolds. They were, in general, neither fanatical nor implacable; but counter-revolutions have their deliriums as well as revolutions. The memory of the excesses, the anarchy, and the immolations of the reign of terror, the disgust for a long despotism, the despair of the nation delivered up, ravaged, and plundered at this moment by foreigners, threw them back with fury upon old times, and made them seek in the demolition of old systems, remedies for, and guarantees against the present evils. The counter-current, which weak and unreflecting minds take for the real current of human affairs, carried every thing before it in public opinion and in the Chambers, and threatened even to absorb the government.

The King trembled and resolved to give the nation time to think. He closed the Chambers and modified the ministry.

VIII.

M. de Vaublanc, a man wholly devoted to the Count d'Artois, was replaced by M. Lainé in the home department. M. Lainé, a friend and councillor of the Duke de Richelieu, came to strengthen the personal policy of the King. His conviction, heroically demonstrated, to base the restoration of the monarchy, on public liberty, the esteem in which he was held by the assembly, and his impassioned but rational eloquence, imparted to the government an authority soon to be required over an assembly so full of intrigues, impatience, and political passion. M. Barbé Marbois, minister of justice, whose principal merit was, that he had been a victim to the Directory, and transported to Cayenne, was sacrificed to the Count d'Artois and the court, which he disturbed, without, however,

Agitation in the departments.

serving efficiently the moderate policy of the King. The Chancellor Dambray, more agreeable to the court, and more docile to the instructions of Louis XVIII., replaced for the present M. Barbé Marbois. M. Guizot, Secretary-General of Justice, a young man whom the friendship of the Abbé de Montesquiou and, his presence at the court of Ghent had brought into credit amongst the royalists, fell, but to rise again shortly, with his minister. He began, at an early age, a public career—precocious, long, and diversified—which was to carry him from reign to reign, from party to party, from elevation to downfall, to a celebrity of political fortune and talent which still endures, and which his vicissitudes forbid us to form a judgment of at present.

IX.

The Chambers were scarcely closed when the counter-action of their proceedings and laws, on the opinions of the liberals and Bonapartists, began to evince itself by secret agitation in the departments. They felt themselves menaced, and they wished to anticipate. The terror inspired by the acts of the Chamber was serious enough to excite, but not sufficiently apprehensive to restrain. The presence of the disbanded officers and soldiers in their native places—their grievances against the government—their complaints of the ungrateful remunerations for their blood in their half-pay—the popularity of their military stories in the public places of the towns, and in the cabins of the country—the contempt and hatred which they excited against this government of emigrants, of refugees, of old men, of women, and of priests—the rumours of confiscation of the national estates, for the benefit of the nobility which they spread amongst the new proprietors, and amongst the peasants—the journals and pamphlets abusive of the Bourbons hawked about the villages—the humiliation of defeat, the hatred of foreign occupation, the bitter ransoms, the heavy taxes, the onerous loans, the perspective of glory closed with the impossibility of war,—everywhere clouded the spirit of the people, and predisposed them to plots and seditions

Conspiracy of Grenoble.

There was not a hamlet on the whole surface of the territory which had not in its disbanded officers, sub-officers, and soldiers, a permanent cabal, and active agents of opposition and insurrection. The presence of the foreign armies alone restrained in the provinces of the east, the north, and the centre, the spirit of disturbance and outbreak which was fermenting in all hearts. The King was liked, was pitied, or, at least, was pardoned; but the Chambers were detested, as were the nobility and the clergy, who were accused of usurping the power of the throne to reconquer, oppress, and humble the nation.

X.

Such was the popular disposition during the summer of 1816. Men of importance at Paris, especially amongst those who had tampered with, or failed in the 20th of March, observed these symptoms with heart and eye, fomented them indirectly, and multiplied alarms in order to multiply discontent. A strange and enigmatical man suddenly caused an explosion, at the extremity of the frontiers at the foot of the Alps, of this concealed fire, which was smouldering amidst the silence of the people.

XI.

This man, whom we knew at that period of his life, was bordering on old age. There was nothing in him which bespoke either great virtues, or great crimes. He was of lofty but slender stature, and walked with his body bent by the weight of years, and by the sedentary habits of a legal man who has passed his life in poring over bundles of briefs. His countenance was vulgar, though shrewd and impassioned; it was encircled by long locks of white hair, matted and flowing upon his neck and his coat, in the manner of barristers whose hair unfolded rolls down upon their legal gowns; his grey eyes, animated with a dull fire, had the unsettled and penetrating look of the ferreter who seeks and hides. His undecided physiognomy gave an appropriate expression to the rapidity of his mind. Every

Didier:—his character.

thing in his appearance was more nimble than profound. He was in perpetual motion upon his seat, rising, and sitting down to rise again; mingling with all the groups in a saloon, and passing from one to another like a breath of air, to fan the embers of conversation. He talked a great deal, with a loud voice, without reserve or consideration; with warmth, though without eloquence. He gesticulated with a rapid motion of his hands, corresponding with the volubility of his tongue. People asked each other who this stranger was, and what familiarity, ancient or recent, had introduced him thus into intimate acquaintance with grave persons, amongst whom he was seen mingling all at once, in the ranks of secret malcontents, and especially amongst the still cautious partisans of the Orleans faction. This figure altogether might equally well have personified indiscretion, mystery, or intrigue, in a theatre at Athens or Paris. His name was Didier; and when this was known, nobody was a bit the wiser as to his past or present life, and inquiry still went on.

XII.

The different parts he had played from his youth upwards had always been active, but subordinate. Born amongst the mountains in the neighbourhood of Grenoble, a country of intelligence, agitation, and flexible genius, brought up for the church, called to the bar, pleading in the capital and in the provinces until the revolution broke out, he had signalised himself like his countrymen, in the enthusiasm and disturbance of the first reforms. Carried away by turns, afterwards, from one side to the other, by the flux and reflux of opinions, he had joined the royalists since 1792, and had solicited, with many others, the honour of defending Louis XVI. before the Convention. On his return to Lyons, where he had animated the spirit of resistance to the republic, a price had been set upon his head after the siege of that city. The Rhone then bore him off into the midst of the royalist conspirators of the south; his correspondence with the emigrants had from thence given credit to his name in the wandering cabals of the princes.

His previous life.

When this fire was extinguished he emigrated himself. He then presented himself to the Count de Provence, as an agent devoted to his misfortunes and his restoration, and he had contracted a certain familiarity of exile with the court of this pretender. Having returned to France after the reign of terror, he had acquired there, amongst the nobility of his province, that degree of credit which is attached to misfortunes suffered in the same cause. He became the agent and solicitor for these families, to obtain from the more favourable government a restitution of their confiscated estates. These lucrative services had enriched him, and had placed him in communication with the public authorities at the period of the Directory. Expert in following, or anticipating the symptoms of wavering opinion, he had published, in favour of the re-establishment of legitimate royalty, one of those fiery, turbulent, declamatory pamphlets, more calculated to mark the fidelity and zeal of the writer than to serve the cause of the prince. He carried royalism in it to a ridiculous excess, but the sensation it caused was forgotten like its anonymous author. On the accession of the First Consul, Didier attracted attention to his name by a panegyric on Bonaparte, entitled "The Return of Religion." It was an invocation to force, to reconstitute the temporal power of the church. In whatever direction blew the popular breeze Didier was carried by his fickleness, and flew to court good fortune. The empire remunerated his adulation of Napoleon by the situation of professor of legislation at the law school of Grenoble. He only distinguished himself in this office by the servile exaggeration of his enthusiasm for Napoleon. More attentive to his fortune than to the study of his profession, he conceived chimerical plans, that swallowed up considerable sums which he had gained in liquidating the estates of the emigrants. The first return of the Bourbons in 1814, brought Didier to Paris, either feeling, or feigning a revival of enthusiasm for their cause; renewing with their court the connection which had been interrupted by twelve years of forgetfulness, and hoping to find in the heart of the King the recollection and recompense of a zeal formerly displayed in emigration. At the moment of Napoleon's debarkation at

Didier's connection with the Orleans party.

Cannes, no one declaimed with more indignation and energy against the European crime of the great proscribed.

XIII.

Whether Louis XVIII. had not thought proper to recompense soon enough in Didier the monarchical zeal so long devoted to another cause, or that the second fall of this prince and the second accession of Napoleon had converted his fickle mind to another fortune, Didier, after the King's return in 1815, showed himself as much exasperated against this prince, and as ardent in his enmity to him as he had shown himself enthusiastic and fanatic for the restoration six months before. Too intelligent not to know that Napoleon, vanquished by Europe, abandoned by France, and a prisoner on the rock of St. Helena, had not a third reign in his destiny, Didier assiduously paid court to the most important adherents of the House of Orleans. It was amongst them that he was heard, a few days before his enterprise, pouring out with a loud voice, allusions and sarcasms against the court, the princes, and the King himself; and professing, amidst the friendly smiles and approbation of his auditory, hatred and contempt the secret of which was not long in revealing itself. Was there an understanding between Didier and these men devoted to the private intimacy of the Duke of Orleans? We do not believe it. Their character repels the suspicion; and the Duke of Orleans himself would not have incited, or listened to from the mouths of his servants, plans of conspiracy against his own race. But there was in these conversations an understanding, at least, of opposition and bitterness against the royal house; and Didier, in exciting himself to rashness before these men, evidently thought he was flattering, if not actually seducing them.*

XIV.

However this may be, it was known a few days after that

* Chance, made us witnesses at the time of these conversations, the relation of which we borrow solely from our own recollections.

His attempt on Grenoble.

Didier had quitted Paris, that he had passed through the departments in the neighbourhood of Lyons, under pretence of private affairs, that at Lyons he had had communications, known to the police, with the members of an association of national independence, who were arrested soon after as conspirators, comprising men devoted in their hearts to the Bonapartist cause; that he had returned to Paris as the contriver of a plot who comes to inspect, or complete his plans, and that he had again departed without leaving a trace of his route.

He was already in the neighbourhood of Grenoble. There the ground was already as well known to him as the people. The peasants of these mountains, a patriotic, soldier-like, and excitable race, were the same who had been worked upon by the emissaries of Bonaparte before the 20th March, and who had escorted his army after his junction with Labédoyère. Since Grenoble by its defection had decided the fate of France, these peasants thought they would re-conquer the country in re-conquering the ramparts of this city. Numerous officers and sub-officers, thrown back into these villages by the disbanding of the army, kept up the fanaticism there for the name of the Emperor. Didier knew that this name alone had sufficient posthumous popularity amongst the populace to excite them to revolt. Once roused to insurrection by such a talisman, and the Bourbons expelled from the throne, political men would easily change the standard upon which ignorance and prejudice might have inscribed Napoleon II., a captive at Vienna, and give to the victorious insurrection the only dynastic signification it could have—the Duke of Orleans. This was a repetition of the abortive plot of the generals Lallemand in 1815, making their soldiers march in the name of the Emperor, and marching themselves with a different object. The flag was of very little consequence to Didier provided it collected together the soldiers and the people, and expelled from the throne the Bourbons who now occupied it.

XV

Concealed from the government superintendents under the name of Auguste, Didier had been hospitably received at the

Didier's proclamations.

mountain village of Quaix, in the house of an old officer of the Egyptian army; nicknamed the Dromedary, in allusion to the rapidity of his journeys in the desert when he commanded the guides of Napoleon there. This officer, famous for his attachment to his old chief, and rendered popular in the mountains by these oriental legends, possessed a great ascendancy over his military companions at Grenoble, and in the neighbouring villages. He assembled in his house the officers, sub-officers, and peasants most to be depended on, and presented them to his guest Didier as the man intrusted with the secret of destiny, come to confer upon their country the design, the first signal, and the honour of the nation's deliverance. Didier, whose name and person were already known to the majority of them, harangued and read to them a proclamation artfully drawn up in the name alone of the *national independence*. This proclamation ascribed to the English all the calamities and humiliations of France, and summoned the people to arms against the foreigners, without explaining the nature of the government which was to represent this national movement. The peasants, who only know popular names, were mystified, Didier's host exclaimed against a concealment which kept back the name of the Emperor from the enthusiasm of his old soldiers. Didier upon this consented to give satisfaction to all minds by turns, sometimes speaking of Napoleon II. to the lowest of the conspirators, at other times of the Duke d'Orleans to the *élite*, and of a national independence movement to the multitude. Thus he traversed the mountains and valleys of Grenoble, Chambéry, Eybens, les Adrets, Pontcharra and Tencin, everywhere secretly enrolling subaltern agents in his cause, animating the hearts of his partisans with the fire of his hatred, and alternately putting forth in his proclamations and nocturnal banquets, either the name of Napoleon II., or the mysterious name of another prince. Joly, Briellet, *chef de bataillon*, Captain Pélissier, Cousseaux, ex-forest ranger, and Joannini, a Piedmontese officer, nearly all of whom had formed part of the second batallion which had flocked round the Emperor at Grenoble, and escorted him to Paris, became the active movers and future chiefs of the insurrection. They prepared by hints of myste-

Preparations for the plot.

rious events three hundred officers or sub-officers of the city and suburbs. They worked upon the citizens, the people, and the schools, but with less success. In the mean time, at Vizille, a hussar named Charlet, Dussert, formerly mayor and a guide to the army from the Alps to Allémont, Durif, formerly mayor of Vaujany, Drevet an old soldier of the guard, Buisson, Genevois, Dufresne, Guillot, Dumoulin of La Mure, Bremet, a notary, Milliet, a landed proprietor at Goncelin, Santon, post-master at Lumbin, Adiné, custom-house inspector at Pontcharra, Julien, a lieutenant of the customs, Turbet, a captain in the same body, Joly, a disbanded lieutenant of Pencin, and all those whom hatred of the Bourbons, antipathy to the foreigners, the recollections of the republic, the fanaticism for Napoleon, disappointed ambition, ruined fortunes, suspended promotion and irksome idleness, could induce to the desperate attempt in order to regain their former position in society, received the watch-word, the hints, private insinuations, deceitful promises, the assurance of the concurrence of Paris and co-operation of Austria, and the sign and initiation into the conspiracy. The republicans of Grenoble, members of other secret societies equally hostile to the Bourbons, were acquainted with the plot, but distrusted and refused to meddle with it. This party, more united and more consistent at that time in its proceedings, did not wish to devote its energies to the exchanging of a monarchy which oppressed it for a tyranny which had already, under the name of Bonaparte, betrayed its cause and ruined its hopes. The brutal and military yoke of a second empire humbled it beforehand more than the light and easily shaken yoke of a pacific and constitutional king. They allowed Didier, his imperialist soldiers, and his unreflecting peasants, to plunge into sedition, ruin, or success, content with not betraying them, and aiding them only by their silence and inertness.

XVI

The winter passed in these preparations, which a thousand mysterious rumours might have discovered to a vigilant police. In the early days of spring, Didier went to Savoy, and as far

Breaking out of the conspiracy.

as Turin, to connect together, at the foot of and beyond the Alps, the ramifications of his conspiracy. Having returned towards the end of April to the centre of his machinations, he appointed the night of the 4th of May for the outbreak. On receipt of this order, transmitted from village to village by the officers and inhabitants enrolled in the conspiracy, the conspirators armed themselves, rising at the cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" formed themselves into small columns under the command of the old military men of their districts, directed their march upon the central village of Eybens where Didier had established his head quarters, and immediately proceeded towards the city, where nothing as yet had led to a suspicion of the rising. The secret had been kept as if by a single mind. Three or four thousand organised and armed men had arrived within a few paces of Grenoble, while the general, the prefect, and colonels assembled at a convivial meeting, were conversing in full security. It is the character of popular conspiracies to break out unexpectedly. When the same thought is in the minds of all, there is no occasion to talk about it, mystery conceals and silence speaks.

Didier proceeded on horseback at the head of these united columns, viewing from the summits of the last of the hills, the gates and disarmed ramparts of the city, congratulating himself on the certain triumph of his cause, meditating a march the following day upon Lyons with the park of artillery, followed and preceded by the irresistible insurrection of those provinces, and raising Paris and the whole of France under the very feet of the astonished foreigners and the crumbling throne

XVII

M de Montlivault, prefect of Grenoble, General Donna diou, commanding the department, Colonel Vautré, and some other superior officers of the garrison were conversing together, when a man in breathless haste, his clothes in disorder, and his feet covered with dust after a long run, rushed into the saloon and demanded to be instantly heard by the general and the prefect. It was the deputy-mayor of La Mure, a small

Resistance of the authorities.

town the most important and the most distant from the operations of Didier, celebrated for the meeting of Napoleon and Labédoyère, and into which these two great conspirators seemed to have infused their spirit. Being informed of the conspiracy at the moment that the conspirators of La Mure flew to arms, this magistrate, M. Chuzin, faithful to the King, and foreseeing the public calamities, had saddled his horse, and, escaping from La Mure through bye-roads, he had galloped towards the city to apprise the royal authorities, and to prevent a mortal conflict between the two parties. Intercepted in his route by other columns descending from the mountains across the country towards Eybens, he had quitted his horse for fear of being betrayed by the noise of its shoes upon the rocks, and continued to run on foot to give the signal of danger and of resistance. "The whole country was marching upon Grenoble; their signal fires already blazed upon the mountain peaks which over-looked the town, and they could hear from the top of the ramparts the dull sound and the military tread of the armed multitude by which they were about to be assailed!"

On these words some doubted and some smiled at the exaggerations and chimeras of the imagination inflamed by fear, while others became alarmed and went to seek for cooler information. Fresh news came from the vicinity of Grenoble confirming, from time to time, the first intelligence. General Donnadieu, a man of prompt courage and cool resolution, quitted the prefecture to arm himself, and call out the troops. He still doubted, however, the reality and the imminence of the danger. The night was dark, and he was walking silently through the streets, when he suddenly met a young man, who drew back on recognising the general, hesitated, and tried to escape on the opposite side of the way. Donnadieu seized the fugitive, dragged him into the light of a lamp, identified in him a half-pay officer of the city, saw the hilt of a sword and the barrels of a pair of pistols shining under his cloak, and, imagining that in him he had got hold of an armed accomplice of the plot, he conducted him with his powerful arm to the neighbouring guard-house, disarmed and gave him into the

Rout and flight of Didier.

custody of the guard. The legion of the Isère, the legion of the Herault, the dragoons of Paris, and the national guard of Grenoble flew to arms; a detachment marched upon Eybens by a circuitous route, in order to reconnoitre, to stop, or to separate the column of Didier. This detachment, either too slow or too weak, came in contact at a few paces from the city with the insurgents, animated by the numerous officers who formed their advance-guard. It was driven back and dispersed with cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" Scarcely sixty paces separated the head of Didier's column from the open gates of the city. The rout of the detachment and the shouts arising from the plain apprised Donnadiou of the extremity of the danger. He pushed forward Colonel Vautré, in double-quick time, at the head of the legion of the Isère to rally the fugitives and charge the enemy. Vautré charged Didier's advanced guard at the point of the bayonet, and was received by a volley from the enemy. A nocturnal struggle, desperate and sanguinary, took place between the legionists and the peasants. Being old soldiers on both sides, they disputed the ground with equal intrepidity. The drawbridge of Grenoble was strewn with the dead and wounded. But Vautré, supported by the re-inforcements which arrived from the barracks near the gates, inspired the soldiers with his own courage, and breaking at length the head of the insurgents' column, he rushed forward to meet the mass of the peasants, fired upon, and drove them back. Didier, dismayed at this first check, galloped towards Eybens, to rally his peasants there; he harangued and encouraged them, and endeavoured to bring them back to the assault of the gates. But there is no rallying for a defeated insurrection. Courage flies with hope; the clattering of the horses' feet of the dragoons of the Seine made these broken bands fly on all sides. Didier's horse was killed under him by a chance shot, and he had scarcely time to rise and escape across the woods which overlook Eybens. At the break of day Vautré, after having scoured the plain, entered this deserted village, the headquarters of the insurgents. He found upon the public place the carcass of Didier's horse, and the body of Captain Joannin, stretched by the side of his own horse, which was

Boastings of the military authorities.

smelling his master. Joannini was still biting a half-torn piece of paper, upon which were inscribed the names of the insurgent chiefs, whom he wished, even though dying, to screen from the vengeance of the conquerors. Vautré followed up his victory as far as La Mure, disarmed that town and the suspected villages, and re entered Grenoble with the spoils of the insurrection—waggons loaded with arms and prisoners. On arriving near the gate of Grenoble, one of the prisoners, the notary Guillot, passed over the road that was saturated with the blood of his son, who was killed the evening before at the assault of that gate. Six dead bodies and numerous wounded, scattered about the avenues of Eybens, and at Grenoble, were the only traces left of the insurrection.

XVIII

Thus ended the sanguinary, but trivial and inconsistent plot of Didier's conspiracy. Had it been successful it would have produced no result, being unsuccessful it left no other vestiges than executions. The civil and military authorities of Grenoble affected to exaggerate its importance, in order to enhance the value of their services. These men did not instigate or provoke it, as the spirit of rivalry and recrimination amongst the conquerors themselves had insinuated, but they allowed it to make noise beyond its actual importance, and they thus involuntarily authorised government to conceive alarms disproportionate to the peril, and to inflict punishments beyond the crime.

The morning after this disastrous night, General Donnadiou, eager to prove his recent devotion to the Bourbons by the *éclat* of an immense service rendered to their cause, wrote to the generals of the neighbouring departments in terms which had neither discretion, modesty, nor truth. "Vive le Roi!" said he in his despatch to his colleagues, "Vive le Roi! for three hours blood has not ceased to flow! Vive le Roi! the dead bodies of his enemies cover all the roads which lead to the city. From midnight till five o'clock, firing did not cease in the

Execution of several of the ringleaders.

space of a league all round the city. Even at this moment the legion of the Isère, which covered itself with glory, is in pursuit of them; prisoners are brought in by hundreds. The prevotal court will execute prompt and rigid justice upon them."

Such were the unbecoming expressions of a military chief after a duty easily accomplished, by which the victorious general announced to France and to the government the outbreak and suppression of this conspiracy. They explain the exaggerated emotions and the promptitude of suppression of the government itself. A victory over the internal factions was for it a striking consolidation in the eyes of France and of the foreign powers. It was but too natural that it should, like its general, endeavour to exaggerate the danger in order to increase the triumph. But should it have uselessly coloured these exaggerations with blood hastily shed?

The prefect of Grenoble published a proclamation to the city, couched in more moderate terms, but declaring that the prevotal court was about to call for capital punishment upon the guilty, without delay as without indulgence. The prisons were encumbered with upwards of four hundred prisoners. The tribunal, which assembled on the 6th of May, condemned to death Drevet, Buisson, and David, who had been taken with arms in the nocturnal action two days before. The next day they were taken out for execution. They marched to the place singing patriotic songs, and their last cry, "Vive l'Empereur!" was the same upon the scaffold as it had been upon the field of battle.

The authorities seemed desirous of refusing time for reflection, and of preventing, by the promptitude of irremediable punishment all explanations, repentance, or excuse, and the clemency which might result from cool examination. The government, rendered giddy itself by the nature of the Grenoble despatches, lent itself but too readily to this precipitancy. By the rapidity of its measures and the number of its victims, it obtained credit for its danger and its strength. Harassed in Paris by the reproaches of weakness which besieged it in the Chamber, in the journals, and in the court of the Count d'Artois, it seized upon this occasion for belying

Proclamation against Didier and others.

these suspicions of the royalists, by showing itself as angry and as implacable as themselves.

A circular of the minister of police, M. Decazes placed fourteen departments under martial law, recompensed the informers, provoked further arrests, excited zeal, summoned to arms the military powers, and placed all suspected citizens at the discretion of the civil authorities.

"Let all bad citizens tremble!" replied the prefect and General Donnadieu. "The authorities have a discretionary power; as to the rebels, the sword of the law is about to strike them." An order of the day by the same general, which resembled the Roman proscriptions, constituted even involuntary hospitality a capital crime. This order of the day stated that "the inhabitants of the house in which Didier should be found would be brought before a court-martial, and shot." And pushing his contempt of honour to the extent of offering a premium for treachery and murder, this order of the day added: "It is decreed that he who shall deliver up Didier, *dead or alive*, shall receive the sum of 3,000 francs." Two days after, the prefect ratified these terrible decrees, by extending the crime of hospitality and pity to all those who should have knowingly granted an asylum to any individuals who had formed part of the seditious bands. "They shall be arrested," said the prefect, "and their houses shall be razed to the ground!"

In his proconsulate at Lyons in 1793, Couthon held exactly the same language. All parties accuse and resemble each other, when they do not place above their anger, conscience, law, and humanity.

The prevotal court being too slow was superseded by a court-martial, an armed tribunal, where Colonel Vautré, after fighting the night before, adjudged the prisoners the day following.

XIX

Twenty-one men condemned to death, of whom five only were recommended to the clemency of the King, and two to be reprieved, delivered on the 10th of May fourteen fresh in-

Rigours of the government towards the respited convicts.

surgents to the fire of the soldiers. The majority of these were peasants drawn in by the torrent of sedition, whose useless blood consolidated no cause. They fell under the balls in a mass, leaving nothing but dead bodies almost unknown to this butchery of justice.

Meanwhile the prayers for pardon and respite, which had emanated from the court-martial itself, and were recommended by the general and the prefect, had arrived at Paris on the 12th of May. No one doubted at Grenoble but that the government, satisfied with these two hecatombs, would ratify the scruples of its own tribunal. There were amongst the seven convicts whose fate had been adjourned, men worthy of pity, and even children, drawn into sedition by their own fathers. What political considerations weighed upon the Council of the King, and on the hand of the minister of police? They may be partly surmised, but we have no right to state them. The pressure of the royalists, concession of blood to their terror, zealous emulation, thirst for examples, dread of being accused themselves while excusing the culprits. Whatever may have been the motive, the interest, or the difficulty which dictated the answer of the minister, it went forth implacable, unexpected, and inauspicious; it was despatched by the telegraph, an aerial and imperfect instrument of communication, in which a syllable omitted, or truncated, might bear life or death to seven men. The only example of an execution ordered, as in the east, by a sign! This reply dismayed the judges and the executioners themselves:

"I announce to you by the King's order," said the despatch, "that you must not grant pardon to any but those who have revealed something important.

"The twenty-one condemned must be executed, as well as David

"The decree of the ninth relative to those who have sheltered malefactors cannot be executed to the letter.

"Twenty thousand francs shall be given to those who shall deliver up Didier."

Their execution.

XX.

The sky itself seemed willing, by veiling its brightness in a fog to intercept, or suspend this despatch of death, and to give ministers time to revoke it: but no counter-order flew to recall it. The general and the prefect received it on the 15th. On the same day, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the seven victims, whose agony the scruples of the court-martial had only prolonged, marched to the place of immolation, and kneeling down on the borders of the ditch of the esplanade, still red with the blood of their brethren, received the discharge in their breasts. A child of sixteen years old, Maurice Miard, in whom no civilized code would recognise the age of discernment and of crime, had marched with the others by the side of an old man, who was encouraging him to die boldly. He was only slightly wounded by the balls, whether from his boyish size, or from the pity of the firing party whose muskets had all turned aside from so young a victim; but having fallen with the rest at the discharge, and struggling under the heap of dead, he raised his head, stretched out his arms, and implored his murderers either to save his life or to kill him entirely. A fresh discharge of three muskets granted one part of his request, and he fell motionless upon the bodies of his slaughtered companions.

Remorse for this early murder followed from that day to their tomb, as a fatality of their lives, all those men to whom zeal, emulation of service to their cause, or unnatural policy had given a part to act in this tragedy, and a participation in this blood of innocence.

Donnadieu himself, in reporting the execution to the ministers, acquainted them also with the excitement it had caused in the public mind.

XXI

Thus perished the instruments of the sedition, while the chiefs either escaped, or were spared the penalty. Didier

Wanderings of Didier and his accomplices.

himself, accompanied by Dussert, Durif, and Cousseaux, his principal accomplices, had succeeded in crossing the frontiers of Savoy. Overwhelmed by the ruin of his plans, wounded in the leg by the falling of his horse upon him at Eybens, reduced by walking, hunger, and want of sleep, he had in addition to bear the reproaches of his accomplices, and speedily, perhaps, their treachery. "You have deceived us," said the three companions of his flight, in the solitary valley of the Alps, where they sat down for the first time by the fire-side of a shepherd: "You have deceived us; Marie Louise was not at Eybens, and not a soul responded to the cry of 'Vive l'Empereur!' within the walls of Grenoble!" "Well then," replied the chief, "learn at length that if we had succeeded it is to the Duke d'Orleans that France would have given the crown!" "The Duke d'Orleans!" exclaimed Dussert, "Bourbon for Bourbon, I like Louis XVIII. quite as well." "If France had rejected him," said Didier, "all was provided for, and we should have proclaimed the republic!" Cousseaux indignantly abandoned him; but Dussert and Durif pursued their route with him across the mountains. The Piedmontese gendarmerie, warned by the French government, were already upon his track. He proceeded painfully towards St. Jean-de-Maurienne, a valley which it was necessary to pass through, to reach the asylum which he had doubtless prepared for himself in Italy or Switzerland, during his excursions the preceding spring. On arriving at Saint-Sorlin-d'Arve, a village a short distance from St. Jean-de-Maurienne, he threw himself, overcome by fatigue, on a truckle bed in the tavern, and slept soundly while waiting for the food that was preparing for him. His companions Dussert and Durif abandoned him while he slept. His host, named Balmain, followed them, and either from the indiscretion of Durif and Dussert, or from suspicion, he ran to inform the gendarmerie of St. Jean-de-Maurienne, and to sell a guest on whose head he knew that a price was fixed.

Didier, on awaking, was astonished to see neither his friends nor his host any longer sitting by the fire. His mind became uneasy; the innkeeper's wife, blushing at the premeditated treachery of her husband, fell at the old man's feet.

Didier is betrayed and arrested.

acquainted him with his danger, gave him some food, dressed the sores of his feet, which were bruised and swollen from walking, and showed him a wood of fir trees where he might hide himself from his persecutors. Didier dragged himself up to the summit of the mountain, through the fogs, not knowing whether there was more danger for him in France than amidst the Alps. He fell, from weakness and despair, upon the cold earth, which was saturated with snow, and fainted. On recovering from his insensibility he descended again, entered a cottage at a distance from the village, where he was assisted by a woman, but repulsed, though not betrayed, by her husband. They sent a child to guide him into a deserted and solitary barn in the openings of the woods, where the mountaineers kept grass for their cattle; there he sheltered himself and lay down upon the straw.

Meanwhile his first host, the traitor Balmain, had returned, accompanied by the gendarmes of Maurienne, expecting to give them up his sleeping guest. His wife, however, confessed that she wished to avoid that shame to his family, and to spare her children from wealth ill-gotten by the sale of blood. The avaricious landlord abused his wife and children, guided the gendarmes, questioned the shepherds of the mountain, and learned from one of them that he had seen a weary old man dragging himself through the fir trees towards the deserted barn. Balmain hastened thither with the carabineers, surrounded the building, broke in the door, discovered Didier stretched upon the straw, gave him up to the gendarmes, and claimed the informer's recompense. Didier, who was at first conducted to Turin, was delivered to France and conducted to Grenoble, the theatre of his crime. General Donnadien received him, interrogated him, and pretended to have received confessions from him which would give importance and mysterious ramifications to his conspiracy. But Donnadien was too much interested to give an impartial interpretation to these pretended disclosures. Didier's vanity was itself gratified in magnifying the importance of the plot, of which he had been the ringleader. "From what dangers have we escaped!" exclaimed the general, addressing Colonel Vautré, after his pri-

Didier's demeanour in prison.

vate conversation with Didier; "even if the King were to make me marshal of France and you lieutenant general, he would still have ill-requited the service we have rendered him!" Words which divulged half the secret of the plot. Frivolity on one side, ambition on the other, credulity here, exaggeration there, mystery everywhere.

XXII

Didier was scarcely deprived of hope when he began to evince sincerity, and neither endeavoured any longer to deceive others or himself, as to the nature of the act which he alone had conceived, perpetrated, and accomplished. His frivolous and excitable mind recovered self-possession and calmness on the brink of the grave. He turned towards his God and accepted, in expiation of his madness, that death which he could not escape. He consoled his last hours with reading the "Imitation of Jesus Christ," that manual of Christian resignation and penitence. A faithful and attached wife and pious children gained admission to his dungeon, and interposed between him and public vengeance. He did not seek to aggravate or to palliate his crime. He allowed it to be partly seen that the glory of the conspirator, in altering by boldness and mystery the face of his country, was the principal motive of his conspiracy. He made an observation of the contradiction, and appeared himself to deplore it, which existed between his former life, consecrated to the cause, the love, and the service of the Bourbons, and his death, merited by a criminal attempt against their family. "Alas!" said he, "I have been walking backwards towards the scaffold!" He then became absorbed in a religious resignation to his destiny. The sentence of death passed upon him did not appear either to astonish or to depress him. When taken back to his cell, he there passed his last hours consoled by the blessings of religion and the affection of his wife, who buried herself, as it were, beneath him in the coffin of her condemned husband. Never did conjugal love partake more completely of the punishment,

His execution.

in order to withdraw half the weight of it from the dying man. General Donnadieu, still pursuing that political secret, which he hoped to extort from Didier, even upon the brink of the scaffold, entered the cell of the convict a few moments before the hour of execution. "What can I confess to you?" demanded Didier, annoyed with the perseverance of the general; "an hour hence I shall be no more." And as Donnadieu still persisted, he added: "Well then, tell the King that the only proof I can give him of my gratitude for the benefits I have received from him, is to advise him to remove from his presence, from the throne, and from France, the Duke d'Orleans and M. de Talleyrand." "These were," wrote the general, "the last words of a man about to plunge into eternity."

XXIII.

A few moments after he was delivered up to the executioners; they tied his hands, and cut off his white hair, which was gathered up and bedewed with the tears of his wife. This woman, grown old in sorrow, and firm in the presence of death, prepared to accompany him even to the scaffold, that she might there receive both his blood and his body. They were obliged to employ a friendly violence to tear her husband from her arms. Didier walked to the scaffold with his head bare, a cloak thrown over his shoulders, in a cold rain, through the deserted streets, in the midst of a death-like silence. His step was firm, his look was directed towards the houses—to the windows, and to the faces which he had known in his native city. The moment he arrived at the place of execution, a window opened and closed suddenly, and a cry of distress rent the air, and affected all hearts. Final adieu of a wife or daughter, escaped for a moment from the vigilance of the family, to offer one more testimony of affection to the dying man.

Didier turned round and became pale at that cry, to which the only reply he could make would be the silence of death. Then resuming his mental prayer, he ascended with firmness the steps of the scaffold, pushed aside the executioner, who was

Review of the conspiracy

needlessly going to adjust his head under the knife, placed it there himself, and received like a martyr the blow which he had dared as a conspirator

XXIV

With Didier died a conspiracy which he had entirely carried in his own head. In spite of the efforts of General Donnadieu, and of the men who had inflated the conspiracy of Grenoble into the importance of a revolution, in order to cast the crime sometimes upon M. Decazes, sometimes upon M. de Talleyrand, and sometimes upon the Duke d'Orleans himself; no indication has appeared for thirty years to justify these suspicions. Even the words of the dying Didier, vague, extorted, heard by a single interested witness, and interpreted by him with a view to his own importance and his private hatred, were rather a warning than an accusation. It is true that after his accession to the throne the Duke d'Orleans appeared to make the cause of Didier his own, by raising his family to public employments, by rewarding his accomplices, and indemnifying his victims. But it is well known that revolutions when accomplished always bear the inheritance of unsuccessful revolutions, though they may have been unconnected with those abortive attempts. The successor of the Bourbons felt compelled to accept, as shed for himself, every drop of blood which was spilt against them during their reign. That which was shed at Grenoble had produced too sinister a cry to admit of its being buried in oblivion. It is certain that Didier, had he succeeded, would have inevitably brought about a change of dynasty, not in favour of an infant prisoner at Vienna, but of a prince of mature age, able, popular, and actually present in France. The conspirator, in raising the standard of Grenoble against the King, thought he should flatter, serve unknown to them, and draw into his triumph, perhaps, in spite of themselves, the overzealous partisans of the house of Orleans. This prince did not conspire, or authorise others to conspire for him, this we know; but the court murmurs, the bitter language, the

Alleged complicity of the Duke d'Orleans.

party accusations, and the secret family enmity broke forth too near him, among his intimate friends and adherents, to exonerate him from inferences which an officious conspirator might draw from these appearances. The Duke d'Orleans who was innocent of any act or show of inclination during the course of the Restoration, was still open to suspicion in consequence of his situation, his attitude, and his silence. Didier was guilty of vain glory sought for in blood; Donnadieu of boasting; M. Decazes of promptitude in anticipating the reproaches of the court and chamber, by telegraphing the sentence of death to the executioners of Grenoble; the King of complaisance to his party and hopeless implacability towards the vanquished. This tragic intrigue, terminated by the dead bodies of so many victims, left a stain upon these names and upon this reign, which posterity will not efface. Blood shed in vengeance, like that of Ney, cries to heaven; but blood which is spilt for ambition cries doubly; for vengeance is a delirium, ambition a calculation. Calculation is less excusable than passion. The price for Didier's head, paid to his host Balmain, and to his denouncer Sert, did not reward their treachery. Sert, after having received the promised 20,000 francs, and an employment in a distant department, was pursued there by the infamous reputation of having trafficked in blood, isolated in the multitude, insulted through his children, obliged to sell his patrimony at a wretched price, excluded from all commerce with men and even with God, whose temples were closed against him.

The house of Balmain, the treacherous and venal host, was marked with a sign of reprobation, and deserted by travellers. His wife died of the shame of bearing his name, his children abandoned the village; he himself after having begged at Paris the price of Didier's blood, lost his reason in returning to his native mountains, but without losing the recollection of his treachery. The wages of the informer yield no profit to those who receive them, or those who pay them. This is a law of God which men take upon themselves to execute.

XXV.

The conspiracies of Grenoble and of Lyons had scarcely exploded, when secret societies, incited to more bitter resentment by the implacable vengeance of the royalists, attempted to get up insurrections in other parts. A leather-cutter named Plaignier, a public writer named Carbonneau, and a sculptor named Tolleron, formed the imaginary nucleus of a society of conspirators under the name of "Patriots of 1816." Watched by the police, which had introduced one of its spies into their assemblies, this agent encouraged them to attempt the assault of the Tuileries, by breaching it through the explosion of a mine introduced through a drain which runs from the palace into the river. They allowed this erection of puerilities, of perversity, and impossibilities, to be raised to the elevation of a state crime. A jury, impassioned and implacable, like all tribunals of opinion in times of party, condemned the three first founders of the society to the penalty of parricides, and seventeen inferior accomplices, and even some women, to other ignominious punishments. The police withdrew its agents from the cause, and left nothing to it but the dupes recruited by itself. Plaignier, Carbonneau, and Tolleron walked to execution, their faces covered with a black veil, as if they had attempted the lives of their fathers. Their hands were cut off before they were beheaded. The horror of these executions for crimes so doubtful or so undecided, begot hatred in the people, and in repressing it, made it more perverse. Secret societies communicated with each other by signs from one extremity of the kingdom to the other. The odium of the condemnations against the generals accused of complicity with Bonaparte during the hundred days, accumulated tragedies upon tragedies. Admiral Linois, General Debelle, and General Travot, were condemned to death. Drouot and Cambronne only escaped the same penalty by a narrow majority. General Chartron was shot in the citadel of Lille; General Bonnaire was transported, his aide-de-camp Mietton executed; General Mouton Duvernet immolated at Lyons; Generals Lefebvre-Desnouettes,

Unpopularity of M. Decazes with the ultra-royalists.

Rigand, Gilly, Gruyer, Radet, Drouet-d'Erlon, the two Lallemands, Clausel, Brayer, and Ameilh, some of them imprisoned, and others fugitives, expiated in person or in effigy, the punishment almost always capital, of their defection. Trials of the press, and trials for seditious language, everywhere followed these military condemnations or executions. The correctional tribunals rivalled in rigour the criminal juries and the courts-martial. The party of the Court and the Chambers, insatiable in its severities, accused through the pens of its writers, the slackness of repression, and the forbearance of the King and his ministers. There is no tyrant more implacable than public passion. Louis XVIII groaned under without having the power of restraining it. He thought he should redeem, by these sacrifices to vengeance or to the safety of his throne, the confidence and the mildness which he had prescribed to his family, and for which he had been punished by the Bonapartists in his first reign. The Duke de Richelieu, exclusively attending to the liberation of the territory, the great work of his department, thought he was hastening the evacuation of the soil by showing to the foreign powers the actual reign everywhere avenged, dreaded, or obeyed.

XXVI.

M. Decazes, in spite of his concessions to the clamours of the court of the Count d'Artois did not hide from himself that the ministry was diverging from its proper line, and was driving amongst the rocks of party governments. The first fragment which was to be carried off by this reaction was himself. As a young man he was opposed to this court of emigration, embittered by the solitude of a long exile, and out of its element in its own country; while as a new man he was displeasing to that ancient aristocracy, by whom the habit of surrounding the monarch made power be looked upon as the property of its rank; as the favourite of the King he disquieted the royal family by the concessions of principles and authority with which he inspired that prince. M. Decazes was, in the

Manœuvres of the ultra-royalist faction.

eyes of the court of the Count d'Artois, a new-born Necker, recommencing after the revolutionary catastrophes those connivances with public opinion which had cast them down. The dismissal of M. de Vaublanc, the avowed minister of the faction of the Count d'Artois, and his second in the council, had already rendered these antipathies against M. Decazes almost irreconcilable. This underhand but turbulent faction affected, from regard for its position, the most excessive devotion to Louis XVIII.; but it carried on its secret manœuvres in the palace, it had its party in the Chamber, its committees in the provinces, its congregations under the cloak of religion in the church, its ramifications in the councils of foreign sovereigns, its organs, avowed or disavowed, in the press. The increasing irritation of the Royalist press, of the majority of the Chamber and of the peerage, led this intestine faction to hope that on the approaching return of the deputies to Paris it would succeed in governing alone the Council, to the exclusion of new men, replacing them with its most fanatical agents, and to lead on the King to the most violent ruptures with the new spirit of the times. The necessity, however, in every form of constitutional government, of seducing public opinion prior to quelling it, and deriving from a certain degree of popularity the power to subjugate the people, compelled the ablest men of this party to pretend for the representative constitution a zeal, real with some and false with others, which gave to the ultra-royalists an appearance of jealous liberalism. M. de Chateaubriand signalized himself by his talent in this new party. In a little code of royalism entitled "The Monarchy according to the Charter," this great writer endeavoured, with as much cleverness as brilliancy, to conciliate monarchy and liberty. He constituted himself, in this book and in literary impromptus scattered amongst the journals of the court, the eloquent publicist of royalty in three branches, after the model of the British constitution and of Mirabeau's ideas in 1789. The revived spirit of the constituent assembly appeared to re-exist in him and in his friends. People imagined they were reading again in these pages the speeches of the Clermont-Tonnerres, of the Moutiers, of the Cazalès, and of the Maury in that

Position of M. de Chateaubriand.

assembly. The three powers, weighed in imagination one against the other, formed a mutual balance at the breath of M. de Chateaubriand, in an equilibrium the elements of which, though real in England, had disappeared in France. There was no longer in that country, any other than a royalty of habit and an immense democracy of fact. Thus the idea of M. de Chateaubriand tended to reconstruct impossibilities, that is to say, a power constitutional, aristocratical, and hereditary in a nobility, which an equal division of property and the suppression of feudal rights would no longer admit. There lay the error of M. de Chateaubriand and his school. The organic repugnance of the nation to the re-establishment of a privileged class rendered the advances of this writer suspected by the liberal party; but when they consented to overlook this radical impracticability in his system, they listened to and repeated with complaisance the noble sentiments of generosity and of liberty which gave such life to his writings. His birth which allied him to the high aristocracy; his christian elegies, which for twelve years past had made him the Jeremiah of the church; his style which made him popular with all lively and sensitive imaginations; his hatred of Napoleon and his despotism, of which he had made himself the Tacitus; his adoration of the Bourbons, the pledge of security to the royalists; and his ambition, so much the more active now that it had been impatiently adjourned during the last reign, rendered M. de Chateaubriand the man the most necessary, and at the same time the most dangerous, to the new monarchy. Discontented with the King, who did not sufficiently appreciate his services; devoted to, but suspected by the Count d'Artois, who wanted more docile adherents; he flattered and disquieted by turns the two powers which divided the palace. A constitutionalist with the King, and an ultra-royalist with his brother, not breaking yet entirely with one or the other, apparently respecting M. de Richelieu and M. Lainé, but already pursuing in M. Decazes the favourite of whom he meditated the overthrow.

XXVII.

The King and M. Decazes were too clear-sighted not to see in the excited and retrograde party of the Court and the Chamber, symptoms of the storm which was brewing against them. They sought, therefore, a natural counterpoise in men who were attached in heart or ambition to the monarchy, but whose previous life made them incompatible with the renewal of the old regime. The majority of these, men of government rather than men of principles, belonging by their names to the old royalty, attached to the empire during its prosperity, and the first to fall off from it on its fall, having recovered in 1814 their ancient devotion for the family of the Bourbons, removed from public affairs, or undecided in 1815, approaching the throne again since its re-establishment, seeking the notice of M. Decazes from similarity of antecedents, since this young man possessed the heart of the monarch, and sheltering themselves under his influence, to re-ascend the broken ladder of their political fortunes; M. Pasquier, M. Molé, M. de Barante, M. Mounier, M. Villemain, M. Guizot, and M. Anglès, some already broken into the vicissitudes of governments, and moderate men from lassitude, the others still young, and moderate from their strength of mind; these men, almost all remarkable through their talents or their expectations, formed the nucleus of an intermediate party destined to extend and enlarge itself greatly, because it took a position in which the King had placed himself, and where the crowd flocks after revolutions, between all parties, offering security to some, satisfaction to others, and pledges to all. A man superior to them in years and authority, M. Royer-Collard, at once a philosopher and a politician, covered them with the mystery of his conceptions, the dignity of his life, and the spell of his aphorisms. He was the concentrated and silent Stoyes of this budding party. An oracle is essential to all religions; M. Royer-Collard was the oracle, still undecided, of this active and equivocal sect, which was afterwards to be called *les Doctrinaires*.

XXVIII

M. Decazes, who had occasion to make a personal party for the King, lent an ear to the counsels of these men, and collected them around him to strengthen his own position. It was from his conversations with these counsellors that he drew the idea, and the boldness, of the *coup d'état* to which he wished to lead the King.

Four ministers, M. de Richelieu, M. Lainé, M. Decazes, and M. Corvetto, convinced that the reins of government would be wrested from the hands of the King if they did not prevent the re-assembling of the Chamber, formed the bold resolution of dissolving it before it had enacted an electoral law and to appeal to the country from the exaggeration and the violence of its representatives. The King, whom it was necessary before all things to draw into this bold resolution, hesitated some days, and then entered himself into this conspiracy against his exclusive friends. The secret of this *coup d'état*, faithfully kept by several men, exploded on the night of the 5th September, before the colleagues of the ministers, or even the King's brother himself, could anticipate the blow that was about to strike them. On the following morning the public journals contained the royal ordinance, which, confirming more and more the King's intention of reigning by the charter, pronounced the dissolution of the Chamber of 1815, and convoked the electors for the 4th October.

The King, who wished to avoid the reproaches of his brother on a secret and an act so aggressive against him, had charged the Duke de Richelieu to go and communicate the ordinance to him before the hour at which it was to be published. The Count d'Artois received this communication as he would have received the death blow of the monarchy. He predicted the ruin of the throne thus deprived of its real supports. He saw in Louis XVIII. another Louis XVI., opening the breach, and tracing out himself the route to his enemies. The palace resounded with his anger and his lamentations. His friends dared loudly to accuse M. Decazes of treason.

Public opinion on the *coup d'état*

The Duchess d'Angoulême refused to receive the ministers of her uncle. The Duke d'Angoulême more rational than his father, and more moderate than his wife, confided without repugnance, and without murmuring in the wisdom of the King. The Duke de Berry, whose youth and military taste had surrounded him with the young officers of the empire, and who affected amongst his intimate friends a contempt for the antiquated superstitions of the old regime, exclaimed, that the King had done well in freeing himself from the intolerable yoke of a Chamber at once servile and rebellious. The court party boiled and bubbled to the verge of madness. The immense mass of public opinion, already weary of the agitations and fury of the representatives it had named the preceding year, responded to the *coup d'état* of the 5th September by a unanimous acclamation of joy. With the exception of the exclusive partisans of the throne, all France became royalist in a single day. The country seemed to have re-conquered its King, the King his country.

The triumphant ministry was violently attacked by M. de Chateaubriand in a phrase added to one of his pamphlets. The King deprived him of his title of Minister of State, but left him his pensions. The struggle then commenced between the government and the royalists. M. de Richelieu who wished to liberate the King from his friends, without giving him over to his enemies, recommended to the agents of the ministry to exclude as candidates for the Chamber only those men who rebelled against the sage inspirations of the King, but to repel with energy all revolutionists and Bonapartists. M. Lainé used the same language in his instructions. The King himself spoke like a father to the presidents of the electoral colleges, who came to receive orders from him previous to their departure for the provinces. "Tell the French people that it is an old man who begs of them to render his last days peaceful by the reconciliation and happiness of his children." The elections inspired by this spirit, ratified by a majority, the *coup d'état* of the 5th of September, by excluding the violent deputies of the retrograde party, and increasing in strength the party of the King and of moderation. M. de

The new elections.

Vitrolles himself, the soul of the Count d'Artois' council, was repudiated by the electors. They treated in the same manner M. Laborie, an agitating satellite of M. de Chateaubriand, as well as M. de Sesmaisons, M. de Bethisy, and M. de Polignac. Nearly all those men who had compromised themselves with public opinion during the last session, either by motions of vengeance, by their wishes for the re-establishment of the old regime, or by secret intrigues amongst the friends of the royal house, were reproved for their zeal, for their systems, or for their manœuvres. The nation declared for itself and for the King, against the excesses of royalism, and against the revolutionary agitations. Orators famous in the minds of the people for their moderation and their talents during the phases of the imperial regime, such as Camille Jordan, Ravez, the friend of M. Lainé, Courvoisier, Mortier, Duke of Trévis, Chabrol, Jacquinet de Pampelune, came to recruit by their numbers, eloquence and consideration, that centre of the new representation, in which the King, M. de Richelieu, M. Lainé and M. Decazes, wished to place themselves with the majority of the country. Men experienced in public affairs, such as M. Pasquier, M. Siméon, M. Roy, and M. Beugnot, all fluent orators, prepared to second them.

M. de Villèle and M. de Corbière, collected around them the remains of the Chamber of 1815, at the same time moderating them. A party of parliamentary observation, rather than of opposition, they seemed to await the acts of government before deciding either to support or to combat them.

A few men more imbued with the recollections of 1789, such as Camille Jordan and his friends, professed the compatibility of reforming principles and constitutional royalty.

Two persons almost isolated, M. Laffitte and M. d'Argenson, signalised themselves by a tendency more republican than imperialist: M. Laffitte, a popular banker, enjoyed a degree of credit founded upon a fortune nobly spent, and upon a mind ambitious of distinction; M. d'Argenson, a great lord, a philosopher, and a benevolent man, whom the inapplicable inflexibility of his popular systems rendered irreconcilable with all oppositions and all governments.

Opening of the Session

In opening the session the King spoke with feeling of the sufferings which the scarcity of corn was causing among the people; of his negotiations with the Pope for a *Concordat* which should maintain liberty of conscience, increasing at the same time the state salaries of the clergy, and finally of his firm resolution to maintain the charter, a treaty of peace still more important between the past and the present. He adduced as a proof of his energetic intention his *coup d'état* of the 5th September. The first act of the assembly demonstrated to the ultra-royalists the decrease of their influence in the votes. The two members, who received the greatest number of suffrages as candidates for the presidency were M. Pasquier and M. de Serres; M. Pasquier, a confidential adviser of the dissolution of the chamber of 1815, M. de Serres, an old emigrant having laid down his arms twelve years before to return to his country, passed from the royal army into the magistracy, a man whose universal talents, greatness of soul, and splendid eloquence, placed him above the partialities and the intrigues of his time. The King gave the presidency to M. Pasquier. This was a mistake of the ministry. The previous career of this statesman, the functions he had long exercised as prefect of police under Bonaparte, and under Savary, the weak manner in which he allowed himself to be surprised and made prisoner by three conspirators, without any other strength than their own boldness, at the period of Mallet's plot, were calculated to point out M. Pasquier to the suspicion, to the resentment and the sarcasms of the royalist party in the Chamber. M. de Serres would have attracted, M. Pasquier repelled. In recommending him, M. Decazes was more influenced by his personal gratitude, than by consideration for the King's agreement with the assembly. In the mean time the two Chambers, in reply to the King's speech, confined themselves to a mere respectful paraphrase of the wishes of the crown. The royalists disavowed by public opinion took refuge in secret intrigues, the focus of which was in the King's palace.

XXIX.

An electoral law, the first reparation which the King owed to the Chambers, offended by the electoral *coup d'état* of the 5th September, was presented by the ministry. It conferred the electoral rights upon every individual who paid three hundred francs of direct taxes. It was expected that at this limit of property, would be found the central point where the aristocracy and the democracy met sufficiently to express at once the national will, and the responsibility by a material pledge of every citizen in the destiny of the state. The royalists through the medium of M. de Villèle, demanded the election by two classes, which being more popular at the base, became more aristocratic at its summit. M. Royer Collard defended the ministry and the elections by one class. He instanced the tumultuous assemblies of the people united in primary assemblies as the cause of the bloodshed during the first revolution. M. de Labourdonnaie, a bitter and insulting orator of ultra-royalists principles in the Assembly, described the ministry under the title of Directory, modified by the introduction of M. Lainé into the council of the King, hoping thus to humble the crown, and to exhibit to the royalists a King degraded by a council more sovereign than himself. Two young writers who were not in the Chamber but who served the minister with their pens, M. Guizot and M. de Barante, wrote from his dictation against the election by several classes. The law was rather forced than obtained from the Chamber of Deputies.

In the Chamber of Peers the party of the Count d'Artois, M. de Chateaubriand, M. de Fontanes, M. de Polignac, and M. de Fitzjames, combated this measure in vain, in concert with M. de Villèle, De Corbière and De Labourdonnaie. The King himself canvassed his own court for votes for his ministers; and he triumphed more through deference than conviction. The law was passed. It constituted an electoral body in France of a hundred thousand large and moderate proprietors. It called them together to elect their representatives

Conspiracy of Lyons.

in the principal towns of the departments. It abolished private consideration to substitute for it the reputation which was known to all. It excluded the people, and constituted political cabal. Two errors which must speedily produce their consequences, increasing opposition in the masses, and ambitious agitation in the assemblies.

XXX.

Bitter discussions on the press and on individual liberty still suspended, and the discussion of the budget occupied the remainder of the session. In spite of the efforts of M. de Chateaubriand and M. de Fitz-James in the Chamber of Peers, the ministry triumphed there on all questions, as it had triumphed over M. de Villèle and M. de Labourdonnaie in the Chamber of Deputies. France, although still partially agitated by seditions arising from the scarcity, longed for peace. The last convulsions of Bonapartism expired everywhere in conspiracies without spirit or result. The ultra-royalists alone agitated, not the country but the court and the journals.

This calm was for a moment interrupted by the outbreak of a conspiracy at Lyons, to which the zeal and jealousy of the royalist authorities of the department gave more importance and substance than it had in reality. General Canuel, an old colleague of General Rossignol in the republican wars against the Vendéans, since converted to royalism, eager for renown in his new cause, commanded the department. This general was urged by a disquietude of mind and an emulation of fidelity, to denounce to the government and to the commissary general of police at Lyons, M. de Sainneville, imaginary dangers, invented or magnified by the military spies, or the officious informers amongst his staff. M. de Sainneville after having acted with occasional rigour against the men declared suspicious by the general, believing tranquillity to be restored, had gone to Paris, leaving the city for a few days to the military police. Some half-pay officers of the villages round Lyons, being enrolled in a conspiracy by a captain of the legion of the Yonne, named Ledoux, concerted a rising of their districts, and an advance

Its abortive end.

upon Lyons on the 8th of June. Ledoux promised them the junction of a portion of the troops, and of the people, at the head of whom he was to join them. Some of the conspirators did in fact wait for Ledoux. Astonished at his delay and at the solitude of the streets, they went to seek him at his residence. He was no longer there. They watched for his return. The day passed thus; at its close they saw Captain Ledoux enter the city, they followed him unperceived. Ledoux entered the general's house as if about to make a secret report to him; the moment he came out, his accomplices, who suspected him of having betrayed them, shot him dead. At the same hour the *tocsin* was rung in eleven populous villages on the banks of the Saone and of the Rhone; a small number of the conspirators, old military men, and masses of peasants, confused and astonished, assembled at the noise of the *tocsin*, some believing in the rumours of a revolution accomplished at Lyons, others thinking it an alarm of fire. Some gendarmes and a weak detachment of troops sufficed to disperse them without resistance. The puerile or imaginary conspiracy vanished with the day. Seven or eight disbanded officers and sub-officers, and a few peasants, accomplices of this military plot, were guilty of madness rather than of sedition. But General Canuel, the prefect, and the mayor of Lyons, the one from boasting the other from credulity or panic, made the agitation of these villagers resound through the whole of France as the explosion of a revolution. The minister believed, or affected to believe in it, in order to conciliate his enemies, who already accused him of indulgence or complicity. M. de Sainneville was sent back to Lyons. In vain he cast doubts on the reality of the asserted dangers. The prefect and the mayor attested them. Two or three hundred suspected persons were thrown into prison. The prevotal court assembled, divided the cases, and separately judged the accused of the city and of each village, as if to aggravate the importance of the crime by the numerous ramifications of the conspiracy. Ten heads were struck off in the city and eleven in the villages; one hundred and ten of the accused escaped capital punishment by being condemned either to transportation or to the galleys. Moveable

Real nature of the conspiracy at Lyons.

columns of troops and gendarmes dispatched into the country, spread everywhere terror and accusations, while perfidious agents provoked fresh insurrections in order to be called on for other services.

In the mean time, the commissary general of police, M. de Sainneville, a witness of these excesses, returned to Paris and denounced them to the ministers. A sinister doubt arose on his information, in the mind of the Duke de Richelieu, M. Lainé, M. Decazes, and the King. They sought the truth in that labyrinth of real and supposed crimes and of incessant punishments. They dispatched to Lyons Marshal Marmont, invested with the title of king's lieutenant in those provinces. Colonel Fabvier, chief of his staff, accompanied the marshal. Their presence in Lyons at length threw a real light upon that enigma of false zeal, confused plots, mutual panics, police, terrors, and iniquities. The accusers accused themselves, the witnesses were self-contradicted, the double-faced agents betrayed themselves, the phantom of pretended dangers, and the importance of exaggerated services vanished. Marshal Marmont suspended, in the name of the King, the proceedings still pending, and individual pardons softened or annulled the punishments. The prefect and the general were recalled. Marmont and Fabvier returned to Paris, and left bitter resentments against them in the minds of the humbled royalists. The conspiracy of Lyons trafficked in by the two parties, and become for many years a text for mutual accusations, remains one of those mysteries of agitated times, for ever enveloped in doubt and conjecture.

XXXI.

In the mean time the ministry separated from all alliance with the party opposed to the *coup d'état* of the 13th September, had successfully admitted into the council, M. Fagouet at the head of the department of justice, M. Molé at the head of the admiralty, and Marshal Gouvion-Saint-Cyr at the head of the war-office. These men, of various but eminent capacities, strengthened the council of the King. They

Insinuation of new blood into the ministry.

evinced on the part of the young minister who had recommended them to his master, a zeal exempt from jealousy for his service. M. Decazes at this moment evidently sought more to serve than to command, for he gave himself in these new colleagues, as he had in M. Lainé, rivals and even superiors in public affairs. M. de Serres was president of the chamber; M. Guizot, M. de Barante, the Duke de Broglie and M. Villemain, men of promise, formed, under different titles around the favorite minister, not only a friendly circle but a political party. All of them well versed in the study of the constitutional history of England, all having felt at an early age, the humiliating weight of the despotism of Napoleon upon thought and upon the dignity of the mind, all strangers either by their birth, or their youth, to the superstitions of the court of the old regime, they laid themselves out with good faith to reconcile young France and the old monarchy, by maturing the one and renovating the other. Gifted with minds more erudite than creative, they had perspicacity enough to comprehend the analogies between the revolution of 1688 and that of 1789, but not genius enough to comprehend the differences between them. Their doctrines were nothing but imitations: they wished to establish in France, without having the elements for it, a parliamentary party between the King, the nobility, and the people, seizing upon the government in right of superior intelligence or ambition, pitting the people against the King and the King against the people, the plebeian mind against the nobility; thus founding a government *caste* independent of all social forms, subsisting and maintaining itself by talent, the management of affairs, the pen, and the *tribune*, like those foreign, but dominating races, which impose and maintain themselves in the east between the people and the sovereign. All those men of the old revolutionist or imperialist parties, who were exhausted but yet unretired, all those young men who felt conscious of some superiority of mind, of eloquence, of character, or even of ambition, rallied round them. Self esteem and contempt for the vulgar herd were the leading characteristics of their school. Insinuating as an intrigue, intolerant as a dogma, they already bore a distant resemblance to those religious sects which

Review of the Doctrinaires party.

flattered the world to enslave it. A few superior minds, such as M. de Serres and M. Royer-Collard, accepted the patronage which these young sectarians conferred upon them to impart to them the splendour of their own reputation. The King and M. Decazes recompensed and encouraged their zeal, in order to intimidate through them the court party, and to govern that of the revolution. A moveable weight, which the minister of police, young like themselves, could apply by turns to any point of public opinion, so as to constitute that government of balances which he wished to create for the benefit of the King. These men, without any connecting link or solid foundation, in the country, were eminently calculated for the part; their principal doctrine was their own importance, and they could refuse nothing to the ministerial despotism of M. Decazes, provided that he did not refuse them anything in the way of influence and ascendancy. M. de Richelieu did not comprehend this new party. Accustomed to the Greek servility of the absolute courts of the north, he only saw in these ambitious young men clever and devoted servants of the court. M. Lainé, a republican by character and a royalist from principle, saw by instinct the spirit of intrigue by which this young party was corrupted. He accepted so much zeal with a secret repugnance. M. Pasquier caressed it as an instrument of government. M. Molé as a useful element of the principle of royal authority, whoever might be the prince; M. Decazes allowed himself to be entirely overreached by it though not adhering to it either by conviction or nature; he reserved his heart for the King, and his political opinions for circumstances. The King, proud and flattered at growing young again in this party, originating in his reign and destined to carry out his personal opinions, rewarded with smiles, with confidence, and favours, the friends of his favourite minister.

M. Decazes acquired more and more this title, so contradictory to the nature of a constitutional government, in which the personal friendship of the King goes for nothing, in his council. But constitutional monarchy was still so recent and so undecided in France, at this epoch of 1817, that no one except court rivals thought of refusing to the King, the right

Royal favour to the family of M. Decazes.

of cultivating friendships, and everybody bent before the royal favour. This favour which had had sufficient power to induce the King to break with the past by the *coup d'état* against his exaggerated friends, was become at this moment a sort of universal power, which held in its hands the fate of all ideas. M. Decazes was the arbiter of the royalists and the liberals. The former flattered him as the confidant of the crown, the latter served him as the moderator of the monarchy and the guardian of the charter. The King loved him even in his family, and surrounded himself with everything which could remind him of his minister. A young and handsome sister of M. Decazes, who was married at Bordeaux, had been summoned to Paris to participate in the high fortunes of her brother, and to temper by female grace, those official receptions which are in France an unavoidable decoration of power. The King had expressed a wish to see her. The countenance, the candour, the respectful astonishment of this sister of his favourite had pleased him. He had admitted her as if by compulsion to a sort of familiarity of conversing with him. This unbending of the mind of an infirm prince in the intimacy of a lady without ambition and without intrigue, imparted to the jealousy of the palace, odious interpretations. These, however subsided before the modesty and disinterestedness of this new favourite of the King. The sister of the minister did not even improve her own fortune by this chance intimacy with the sovereign. She entered the palace pure from all dishonour, and left it equally so after the fall of her brother.

The King who wished to give to the fortune of his favourite minister, a foundation more permanent than his friendship, occupied himself to get him admitted into one of those families whose adoption naturalises new men in ancient races. M. de La Fayette, whose first wife had been a daughter of the Prince of Nassau Saarbrück, and who had married, after her death, a young and handsome woman, with gracefulness and wit that gave her a distinguished position in the aristocratic and literary saloons of Paris, had a daughter by his first marriage. This young lady was heiress to her father's name, to the princely fortune of a branch of the Nassau family, and to

the empire which her mother-in-law had exercised over the literary and political world of the Parisian saloons. The King wrote, with his own hand, to M. de St. Aulaire, to ask him to give his daughter in marriage, to his minister. M. de St. Aulaire, who was too much of a courtier to resist the wishes of the King, and who was also a political friend of his proposed son-in-law, and the habitual host of the new party, of which his house and that of M. de Broglie constituted the focus, acceded to the King's demand. M. Decazes, a plebeian who was repudiated by the royalists, became a member of the aristocracy through court favour. This good fortune of the minister irritated the nobility without subduing it, M. Decazes was accused of vanity, M. de St. Aulaire of fawning, and the King of a profanation of the aristocracy. The hatred against the favourite increased with his elevation.

XXXII.

The elections of the deputies, and the tranquillity enjoyed by the country permitting the absence of the Duke de Richelieu, he proposed going to the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, where the ministers of the great powers were about to assemble on the summons of the Emperor Alexander, and the suggestion of the King, to deliberate on the anticipated evacuation of France by the army of occupation. But the desperate party which had been dethroned by the ordinance of the 5th of September, saw with terror the hand of Europe withdrawing from the affairs of France, and the country about to be delivered over to the sole domination of the King and the policy of his minister. The Duke de Richelieu, the Russian Ambassador, Pozzo di Borgo, and the Duke of Wellington, yielding to the anxious wishes of the King, acted in concert to avert the humiliation of France, and to induce the coalition to restore its nationality and independence; but some men who were fonder of servitude even than their enemies themselves, who were not desirous of a longer oppression, got up at Paris, in the cabals of the retrograde faction, an apocryphal intrigue to beg for the continued intervention of the foreign powers in the

The *note secrète*.

affairs of the kingdom. This intrigue, more worthy the name of plot, which continued in a part of the palace the machinations of the emigrants, broke out suddenly by the publication of a memorial secretly addressed to the foreign powers, and which received from this mystery the name of *note secrète*. As an underhand explosion of the rage of the retrograde party, emanating from the pretended terrors of the adherents of the Count d'Artois, and a summing up of the grievances of some men whom the King's sagacity had thrown into the shade, this note of obscure diplomacy and double meaning, was still more culpable in spirit than diction. It did not openly call upon Europe to continue and increase its armed superintendence of France, it even displayed patriotism in its language. But in depicting to the eyes of strangers France in a state of social dissolution, *the government of which could not maintain itself except by the presence of foreign armies*, and concluding by praying for a more decisive compulsion of the King to effect a change in his system and ministry, the *note secrète* represented in a peremptory manner to the foreign courts the necessity, under pain of universal conflagration, of still maintaining the occupation of the country. This was the first authentic revolution of that government, or rather of that secret counter-government, composed of men sincerely but blindly convinced of the ruin of the monarchy in the hands of the King, and of other men interested in agitating the court, and eager to take advantage of the reign of the prince whom they led astray, for the gratification of their restless ambition.

M. de Chateaubriand was suspected of being the writer of this denunciation of France to the world, because it set forth some of his doctrines, and breathed his enmity to the ministers. He had then in reality connections with the men of intrigue of the court of the King's brother. But such a denunciation of his country to Europe was an outrage on the patriotism of that great writer. He flung the imputation from him as an insult. He was incapable of borrowing foreign arms to combat even the internal factions which he detested. The author of the *note secrète* was, it is said, M. de Vitrolles. He had drawn it up at the instigation of the Count d'Artois, or at least had

Opening of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle.

communicated it to that prince before he despatched it to the ministers of the foreign powers. The Duke de Richelieu, being informed of this strange document by his diplomatic agents in Germany, was dismayed. He lamented so many efforts and so many sacrifices for the emancipation of his country, thrown away or defeated by so anti-national a conspiracy. He wrote to the Emperor of Russia who began to be influenced by these manœuvres to bring him back to his former confidence in him, and to his unvarying generosity to France. Pozzo di Borgo and the Duke of Wellington, although foreigners, indignant at this intrigue against the government of a good monarch, and at this perversity of faction, powerfully assisted the Duke de Richelieu to efface from the minds of the allied sovereigns the artful distrust excited by this underhand diplomacy. The congress opened under the most favourable auspices on the 20th of September. Prince Metternich, followed by that *cortège* of generals and publicists of the court of Vienna, who were animated by his superior intellect which at that time governed all Germany; M. de Nesselrode and M. Capo d'Istrias, political confidants of the Emperor Alexander; the Duke of Wellington, the European generalissimo; Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning, English statesmen; and finally M. de Richelieu removed the unpleasant feelings created in the minds of the allied sovereigns. M. de Richelieu brought with him to these conferences two young, personal, and political friends of his, to assist him with their advice and eloquence in the transactions of the treaty. One was M. de Rayneval, brought up from his infancy in the traditions of French diplomacy, which his father had directed during three reigns; the other was M. Mounier, son of the president of the National Assembly in 1789, afterwards private secretary to Napoleon during the Empire, and subsequently attached, after its fall to that constitutional monarchy which had been imagined by his father both men; whose moderate opinions indicated a solid judgment, and to whose management might be confided the most important affairs of Europe, without any apprehension of an excess of zeal or indiscretion, or a deviation from probity. The serious gracefulness of M. de Rayneval, the

It proclaims the evacuation of France.

natural air of authority of M. Mounier, and the rapid and superior intelligence of both were eminently calculated to see everything, to simplify everything, and to decide upon everything, under the direction of a prime minister, who was also their friend. The choice of these persons, approved of by M. Lainé, was a happy preliminary to success.

XXXIII.

The presence of the Emperor of Russia, and his friendship for the Duke de Richelieu, secured the acquiescence of the other powers in the wishes of the King of France. "Your nation is brave and honourable," said Alexander to the French plenipotentiaries. "It bears its misfortunes with courageous resignation; will you be answerable for it to me? Do you believe it is prepared for evacuation? Do you think its government is firmly consolidated? Speak frankly, I am a friend and admirer of your nation; I only require your word. I do not fear," he added, "the development of liberal principles in France. I am a liberal myself; I could even wish that your sovereign by some striking act, would attach the new interests still more strongly to his throne. I fear the *Jacobins* (the revolutionary name of demagogues); I hate them; take care not to throw yourselves into their arms; Europe will not suffer any more Jacobinism. Nothing but a holy alliance founded upon religion and morality can save social order. In the name of heaven, M. de Richelieu, let us save social order!" In these words in which was expressed so divine a thought, the reverse of which, and its triumphs, had so deeply affected the young sovereign of so many millions of men, was recognised the deliverer of the continent, and now the moderator of the world. Such sentiments infused into, or enforced upon all around him by the Emperor of Russia, promptly scattered the secondary difficulties which the Duke de Richelieu must have encountered in the pretensions and ambition of other courts. The evacuation of France was proclaimed, and the definitive amount of indemnity for the war, was fixed at 265,000,000 of francs by the French and foreign commissioners. History ought

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

to state to the honour of the characters of the liquidators of so large a debt that the Duke de Richelieu on quitting the ministry, was rewarded, in consequence of his limited fortune, with a personal grant from his country; that M. de Rayneval died in straitened circumstances, leaving only his name as an inheritance; and that after the death of M. Mounier, his wife and son lived upon the most moderate state salary in a public employment, at the extremity of the kingdom.

Franco, thus reconciled with Europe, entered by secret articles into the confederacy of the Kings, and into the spirit of the holy alliance. The Emperor Alexander after the signature of this treaty, wished himself, to bear to the King, at Paris, the expression of his respect for his age, and his concurrence with his opinions. He was desirous of enjoying for the last time, the popularity he had acquired in France. Louis XVIII in a confidential narrative, *written by his own hand, and hitherto unpublished*, thus relates the impression that he received from this visit, and from this emancipation of his people brought about by his wisdom, and the services of the Duke de Richelieu. Such a document, springing from the heart, is an evidence too rare and too precious of events not to be received with eagerness. They who have mingled in great scenes are always their best historians. The real nature of events is best known to the actors in them

“ December, 1818.

“ *Qui vidit, testimonium perhibuit, et verum est testimonium ejus—*
St. John xv.”

“ One of the happiest moments of my life was that which followed the visit of the Emperor of Russia. Without speaking of the extreme kindness he displayed in coming for the sole purpose of seeing me, and thus calling to mind, but in a nobler manner, that which the basest flattery induced the Duke de la Feuillade to do with respect to Louis XIV., it was difficult not to be gratified with his conversation. Not only did he enter into all my ideas, but he even expressed them to me before I had time to give them utterance myself. He highly approved of the system of government, and the conduct that I had

followed, since I determined to issue the ordinance of the 5th September 1816, (I cannot help remarking that this was the period of the Paris elections, and that the Emperor went away fully persuaded that Benjamin Constant would be elected.) Finally this prince passed an eulogium on my ministers, and particularly on Count Decazes, for whom I am not afraid of avowing a friendship founded upon qualities at once the most solid and the most amiable, and upon an attachment of which one must be the object to appreciate all its value. I saw in the certain evacuation of France, on moderate conditions, external tranquillity assured for a long time, and nothing appeared to me to threaten internal peace.

"Some of the elections displeased me, such as those of the departments of La Sarthe, La Vendée, and of Finistère; but these are annoyances incident to a constitution like ours, and the bulk of them was good. I remarked with pain in the Duke of Richelieu's letter that he was more affected at them than I was, but I flattered myself that on his return here, it would be in drawing closer and closer to his colleagues that he would seek a remedy for the mischief produced by the *Minerve*, and I may incidentally add, aggravated by the *Conservateur*.

"I was mistaken, he had, *unknown to me*, searched for and thought he could find other remedies. The words *unknown to me* may surprise those who read them. In writing them I am aware of the ideas which they may give rise to with respect to myself; but the truth must be known, and I must, therefore, tell it. But to return to what I was saying

"For a long time past every one has been persuaded that, if the ultra-royalists, convinced of the impossibility of making their exaggerated system succeed, would silence their personal hatred and frankly embrace the system of moderation, the ultra-liberals would not dare to raise their heads. The ministers had, as everybody knows, laboured to effect this reconciliation, but it is equally known how little success they met with in the negotiation. It is known that the ultra-royalists demanded concessions of principles, and personal guarantees which it was impossible to accede to: it is also known that, far from meeting the advances of the ministry, whom they did

not cease to insult by their writings; their chiefs had, during the session of 1815, fought in the ranks of the ultra-liberals. More is known but nothing has been judicially proved. My ministers and myself did not the less feel the necessity of a reconciliation; this was also the opinion of the most enlightened foreigners. The Duke of Wellington spoke of it to me on his return from Aix-la-Chapelle. 'The ultra royalists,' he said, 'must return to the ministry; but,' he added, 'unconditionally.'

"The aspect of the session about to open had nothing of a threatening character; this ministry, which the ultra partisans of both sides sought so much to cry down, had, however, re-established everywhere order and confidence. France was respected abroad: credit alone had been shaken, but this was only the credit of the bank; for, while the five per cents fell, the treasury bonds maintained their prices. I have already said that the mass of the elections was good; so that, although very lively debates might be expected, it was very probable that, in the Chamber of Deputies, the majority in favour of the ministry would be at least what it had been in the last session; that of the Chamber of Peers was much smaller; but, at least, there was one. Such, in my eyes, was the state of affairs on the return of the Duke de Richelieu on the 28th of November.

"Before I go any farther, I must revert to the position in which the Count Decazes was placed. His department, so important while the law of the 29th of October was in force, had very much declined after the cessation of that law; he was about to lose the sole and feeble weapon which remained to him, the censorship of the press. The enemies of Count Decazes, after having, in attacking him, verified the fable of the serpent and the file, had changed their ground of attack. It was no longer the minister they attacked, but the department, by depicting it as unconstitutional, arbitrary, and as a superfluous expense. With such arguments one is always sure of obtaining the suffrages of the multitude. Accordingly, they completely succeeded, and things had come to such an extremity that it was by no means certain that in the forthcoming session, the budget of the general police would pass.

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

But even should it do so, what is a minister without power, or authority, and yet loaded with the same responsibility as when he had both? Count Decazes felt this so strongly that he proposed the suppression of his department and his consequent retirement from the council. All his colleagues exclaimed against this proposition, some because they felt how much his judgment, his coolness in the most critical circumstances, and his capacity for public affairs rendered him necessary to the state; others, perhaps, because they thought my friendship for him made him a useful medium of communication between myself and the ministry. The Duke de Richelieu, who was incontestibly one of the former, sought for the means of keeping him by proposing to M. Lainé to give him the home department, and to take instead of it that of justice. I offered to facilitate this arrangement, to which M. Pasquier unconditionally agreed, by making the latter minister of my household, with a seat in the council. M. Lainé refused to make the exchange, and tendered his resignation, which I was far from accepting, more especially as the Duke de Richelieu had declared he would not remain without him. M. Decazes consented to bear till the end of the session the weight without alleviation of his expiring department, and the council remained as it was.

Let it be remembered what I have before said, that the Duke de Richelieu had, *unknown to me*, searched for and expected to find a remedy for the mischief that he apprehended. In retracing this fact, however recent it may be, and in recording it here, I fancy myself in a painful dream rather than recalling to mind an actual truth. Posterity will never believe that a minister, however great he might be, could conceive, much less carry into execution a plan, the inevitable effect of which would be to change the whole system of government, without saying a word of the matter to the King. It will be still less believed when it is known that this minister was the Duke de Richelieu, the most loyal man that has ever existed, and this king, Louis XVIII. accused of weakness but not of indiscretion, and consequently one would believe that it was easy, without betraying the secret of the plan, to endeavour

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

at least to effect a change in his opinion. Well then, in spite of its improbability, the thing is an actual fact; and it is the more important to me that it should be known, inasmuch as those who will think otherwise may, I feel assured, accuse me of having pursued during this astonishing month of December, 1818, a very tortuous course. In thus defending myself I have the appearance of accusing the Duke de Richelieu. I cannot, it is true, exculpate him from the mystery he has made use of with respect to me; but I am persuaded—and it will be seen further on if I am wrong—that he was ignorant of what his policy would lead him to. He wished to rally the ultra-royalists around the ministry, by changing the law of elections, and he did not perceive that he was thereby placing the ministry at the discretion of the ultra-royalists. Who had conceived this plan, or who had crowned it with success I know not; and I do not wish to state here any but facts within my full and entire knowledge, taking the freedom, however, of adding my reflections when they seem to me plausible.

“However this may be, endeavours had been made to detach from the centre, which, until then, had constituted the strength of the ministry in the two Chambers, a sufficient number of members to insure a majority to the ultra-royalists. The intrigue had been conducted with a secrecy which I should praise in another cause; it had escaped even the vigilant eyes of M. Decazes. Its success had been complete in the Chamber of Peers, but was more doubtful in that of the Deputies. The first intimation I had of it was from the chancellor, who, a few days before the opening of the session, came to acquaint me with the names of those whom the meeting of ministerial members proposed for the secretaryship of the Chamber of Peers; adding, that he was not very sure that they would pass, as there had been a counter-meeting which had proposed others. As he did not explain himself any farther I thought he was speaking of a meeting of ultra-royalists, a thing which had always existed, and I did not trouble myself about it. But I was soon further informed by M. de Brezé, who came to tell me that in fact there had been formed, on a suggestion of the Duke de Doudeauville, a meeting of ministerial members, to

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

effect a junction with the right side. He showed me a list, at the same time, drawn up by this meeting, as well for the bureau as for the commission on the address in reply to my speech. The first list bore the names of Doudeauville, of M. de Vérac, of the Duke de Bellune, and of M. Dubouchage. I had nothing to say against the two first, and I was going to make some observations on the two others, when, casting my eyes on the second list I saw at the head of it the names of the Marquis de Talaru, and the Viscount de Montmorency, both of them bitter ultra-royalists, and the reputed authors of the *Conservateur*. At this I broke out: I reproached M. de Brozé with belonging to a society which made such a choice, and I quoted to him this verse from *Athalie*:—

‘Rompez, rompez, tout pacte avec l’impiété.’*

“I know not what further I said to him, I was so excited. He defended himself by naming to me persons of upright principles, but somewhat weak, who formed part of the meeting. Finally, he informed me that it was held at the residence of Cardinal de Beausset. Had a thunderbolt fallen at my feet it would have startled me less than this name. Until then, like the people who formerly when oppressed cried out in their misery, ‘Oh, if our good King only knew it!’ I said to myself, “Ah, when the Duke de Richelieu shall come to know it!” It was not that he had kept me in ignorance of a conference that he was to have had with M. de Villèle; but as he had not spoken of its result to any of his colleagues, or to myself, I thought it had come to nothing like the preceding conferences. But the name of Cardinal de Beausset dissipated my error; he has too much mind, and he is too much connected with the Duke de Richelieu to have taken so great a step without his approbation. I became cool immediately, dismissed M. de Brezé, and gave myself up to my reflections.

“It may well be believed that they were sad; I saw myself reduced to the unpleasant alternative of approving, without knowing its nature, a proceeding which could scarcely be otherwise than opposed to that which I had followed for two

* ‘Break, oh! break every compact with impiety.’

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

years past, and which I believed to be the only good one, or break with the Duke de Richelieu. The first of these was rather inglorious, and even dangerous; the second had a thousand inconveniences still more serious. Doubtless the step taken by the Duke de Richelieu unknown to me was an error for which it would be difficult to find a name: I do not wish to justify it, I do not even comprehend it; but what everybody may comprehend is the existence of the culpable person, called to the ministry under the most terrible circumstances in which a nation was ever placed; he did not hesitate to undertake it, he did much more: he signed the convention of the 20th November, 1815. Yes, I say it boldly, it was the act for which he will be most applauded by posterity. Let us consider the position in which France was at the time. One million one hundred thousand foreigners come, I willingly believe with good intentions, but inflated by victory, amongst whom the love of pillage daily increased, covered one-half of our soil. The sovereigns assembled in Paris treated me, it is true, with great respect; but generosity is always shown to grey hairs, and the rod of power was not the less felt for it. Two prefects, those of the Sarthe and the Loiret, had been torn from their functions, and dragged into captivity. M. Decazes, then prefect of police had nearly experienced the same fate. The master-pieces of art, the possession of which was guaranteed to France by the treaty of May 30, 1814, had been carried away by main force, under my eyes and from my residence. In the south of France, were it not for the heroic conduct of the Duke d'Angoulême, who, without means or arms had daunted General Castanos, the Spaniards would also have come, without having shared in the victory, to share, at least in the booty. But the danger was only suspended. What were our resources? None, it must be acknowledged. The army of the Loire which, I believe, would have been a very feeble one, was disbanded, and if any energy remained in France it only evinced itself by fermentations of civil war. We could not even hope for the melancholy glory which honoured the last moments of Carthage. The foreigners imposed, it is true, very hard conditions, but we were not in a

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

condition to refuse them; and, independent of the devastation caused by them, their presence alone cost France more than a million of francs per day to no purpose. Under such circumstances the virtuous man and friend of his country disdains vain clamours and goes straight forward to his object. This is what the Duke de Richelieu did, and the applause of posterity will avengé him for the false shame which it has been attempted to cast upon him on this occasion. From that moment his extreme probity had not only acquired for him with the foreign powers a degree of consideration such as few ministers have enjoyed, but even at home it had reduced the most decided adversaries of our system to traduce his talents, not daring to attack his person. Finally, he signed those famous acts of Aix-la-Chapelle, which liberated France, and replaced her in her proper rank. To these considerations were joined others of great importance; all my ministers would have quitted me, above all the Count Decazes, who had often declared to me—and in this I fully agreed with him—that if on his return from Aix-la-Chapelle, the Duke of Richelieu persevered in his project of retirement, he would follow his example. Now, if they had resolved on a voluntary retreat, what would they have done had they been forced to it? In short, where should I myself have found the necessary strength for an act of vigour, I who, in spite of the inconceivable silence of the Duke de Richelieu, in spite of other still more painful recollections, still regret that I have no longer near me a man whom evil counsel may lead astray, and even plunge into measures altogether at variance with his character, but whose natural probity would soon bring him back into the right course, with so much the greater facility that his heart was never guilty. I resolved, therefore, to appear ignorant of what was not communicated to me, and to continue faithful to my line of conduct, which was the more easy to me from the Duke de Richelieu assuring me—and I am certain with sincerity—that he had made no change of system. Moreover, there was no appearance of disunion in the ministry. My opening speech was discussed, and unanimously adopted, with the exception of a few phrases, which, at the moment I was about to pronounce it, the Duke de Richelieu

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

proposed that I should add, and the idea of which belonged to M. Decazes, this amongst others: 'the prince has recovered his independence, without which there is neither king nor nation.'

"This apparent union did not continue long. The opening of the session took place on the 10th, and on the 12th ministers deliberated on the line of policy to adopt under the actual circumstances. The keeper of the seals, who spoke first, described their serious aspect very well, but without coming to any definite conclusion. M. Roy did the same. Marshal Gouvion, Saint Cyr, and M. Decazes were of opinion to continue steadily in the course hitherto pursued. MM. Molé, Lainé, and the Duke de Richelieu counselled an approximation to the right side, and consequently to propose an alteration in the law of election. There was not, therefore, any decided majority, and the deliberation was adjourned to the 14th, when it was resumed, without, however, producing any further result; but the subject was thought to be sufficiently discussed to be submitted to me at the next council.

"Many things happened in the interval. The Chamber of Peers appointed its bureau, the same names that M. Brezé had communicated to me, except that M. Pastoret was substituted for M. Dubouchage, and that, said the leaders, through consideration for me, because M. Dubouchage having been my minister it might not be agreeable to me to see him often. They forgot that the preceding year the ultra-royalists, profiting by a disagreement amongst the ministerialists, had appointed to the secretaryship the Duke de Feltre, who had quitted the ministry after M. Dubouchage; or rather they wished to make a parade of a pretended respect for me, more insulting than a direct affront. When, in the commission on the address, they had done the Duke de Richelieu the honour to ask him whom he wished to be nominated; at this question, yielding to a natural impulse, he had replied, 'Ministerialists.' But they soon showed him that it was a mere affected act of politeness, and told him plainly that it was impossible. I can never conceive how, at these words, his eyes were not opened, and that he could not see he was the slave of the party that he

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

had imprudently favoured, and which only intended to make him one of those idols of the Gentiles, *which have eyes but see not*; how, in short, he did not make a generous effort to try at least to break his chain. Nothing of the kind, however, took place, and he confined himself to replying pettishly: 'Well then, nominate rational people!' These rational people were, MM. de Talaru, Viscount de Montmorency, De Pastoret, and De Rosambo, no less ultra-royalists than the two first mentioned. I was, it may be imagined, still more hurt at this nomination than at that of the bureau; but, persuaded that a king cannot commit a greater fault than to exhibit rage which he cannot gratify, I contented myself by mentally exclaiming with some bitterness:—

“ ‘Attale, était-ce ainsi que régnaient tes ancêtres?’ ”*

“ But the pain I then experienced was much lighter in comparison with that of which I am about to speak. The Duke de Richelieu, who, at all times, had so highly and nobly shown himself the friend of M. Decazes, and who, a few days before he left Aix-la-Chapelle, sent him a message on the subject of an affair which interested him personally, and which had succeeded badly, ‘that he was in despair at the idea of failing in the only negotiation which really affected him.’ The Duke de Richelieu, I say, seemed to be embroiled with him; he would see him no more, and would not even reply to his letters. Prepared as I had long been for the retirement of M. Decazes, with whom I saw very clearly that the ministry could not subsist, my friendship for him made me hope that he would, at least, quit his position with the honours of war, and I was too well aware of the advantage it would give his enemies if his retirement took place immediately after a rupture with the Duke de Richelieu. Moreover, and independent of what related to M. Decazes, nothing could be more precarious than the position of the ministry. M. Lainé had announced his unshaken resolution to retire. The Duke de Richelieu declared that he would not remain a second after

* “ ‘Attala, was it thus thy forefathers reigned?’ ”

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

him, and the very pressing applications to the former had only a very equivocal success.

"May I be permitted here to speak of the state of my health, not with a view to excite pity, but to serve as an excuse for the faults that I may have committed in such difficult conjunctures. On the 12th I had an attack of gout: it was so slight for three days that I thought it would have passed away; but on the evening of the 15th the pain became very violent, and on the 16th it came on with a degree of severity which I will describe in a few words: great suffering, little sleep, no appetite, fever, and prostration of strength mental and physical. Such was my condition for more than eight days.

"Meanwhile the political horizon seemed to clear up for a moment. The ministers who were members of the Chamber of Deputies being obliged to be present on Wednesday, 16th, the day of election of candidates for the presidency, the council was adjourned to Thursday. On Wednesday evening the Duke de Richelieu unexpectedly appeared at the assembly of the Count Decazes, was very polite to him there, and the following day paid him a visit. An explanation took place between them, at the conclusion of which they became reconciled, and it was agreed that at the council the great question should be rather casually alluded to than profoundly discussed.

"The council assembled on the 17th. The keeper of the seals spoke there the first, as he had done at the Duke de Richelieu's, that is to say, very fluently, but without coming to any conclusion. Marshal Gouvion was of opinion that nothing should be changed, and no attempt even made to alter the law of elections. M. Molé declared that he did not think it possible to continue in the same course which had been followed up to that moment; he was of opinion that they should lean towards the ultra-royalists, without concealing the fact, that this would be to give themselves masters, but that between two evils they must choose the least. M. Lainé thought that they should plant the ministerial standard, and hold out a hand to the right and the left side. M. Roy spoke nearly to the same purport. M. Decazes developed the danger which

he saw in trying to change, or rather to destroy the law of election, which he described as popular in the highest degree, and he concluded to remain firm in our course. The Duke de Richelieu spoke last. It was easy to see that he inclined towards the opinion of M. Molé; but he decided no more than did the keeper of the seals and M. Roy. At length I spoke, and seizing the idea of M. Lainé, 'Let us plant,' said I, 'our standard upon the ordinance of the 5th of September, 1816. Let us continue to follow the course which has united us up to the present. Let us extend a hand to the right and to the left, saying with Cæsar, 'He who is not against me is with me.' Thus terminated this council, and I was simple enough to think that all discussions in the ministry were about to cease; it will be seen how mistaken I was.

"On the 16th M. Ravez had obtained the necessary number of votes to constitute him a candidate for the presidency; M. de Serres had almost as many; nevertheless it was impossible for me to avoid nominating M. Ravez. I was wrong to be in too great a hurry to say so, or the Duke de Richelieu in announcing it to M. Ravez before the affair had been decided upon in the council. This double imprudence gave a triumph to the ultra-royalists, who, seeing the selections made by the Chamber of Peers as well as this, (for I must say that M. Ravez was one of those who had allowed themselves to be led away), no longer doubted their victory. Their joy was of short duration. Among the vice-presidents one alone, M. Blanquart de Bailleul, whose case was the same as that of M. Ravez, could give them any hope. But the choice of secretaries, and especially that of M. de Saint-Aulaire, father-in-law to Count Decazes, sufficiently proved that the old ministerialists were not yet vanquished. I confess that I could not help a feeling of joy, but it did not continue long, for the Duke de Richelieu was so much offended at it, that for the first time in his life, the following Sunday, (the elections took place on Friday and Saturday), he spoke to me with bitterness of M. Decazes, almost accusing him of having been the instigator of these selections. I then felt that the breach could not be healed. I lamented it deeply; but, for the reasons before stated, I

determined, at whatever sacrifice, to offer up everything to the advantage of keeping the Duke de Richelieu in the ministry. This was the state of affairs when, on Monday evening and on Tuesday morning, I received the following letters from the the Duke de Richelieu,ⁱ M. Molé,ⁱⁱ M. Lainé,ⁱⁱⁱ M. Pasquier,^{iv} and M. Decazes,^v—

It is with extreme regret, but with an irrevocable determination that I supplicate your majesty to accept the resignation of the post which I occupy, and which I lay at your feet. My firm conviction that I can no longer be of any use in your service, sire, or of advantage to the country, has determined me to take this step. I hope your majesty will be pleased to inform me to whom I am to deliver the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. The circumstances under which I accepted it, and all that has passed for the last three years, must prove to your majesty that if I now entreat of you to grant me permission to retire, it is not for want of devotion or of courage.

“(Signed) RICHELIEU.”

II.

“The situation of the ministry leaving me no hopes of being useful to your majesty, and of justifying your confidence by continuing to serve you, I pray your majesty to accept my resignation, and to inform me to whom it is your pleasure that I should hand over the portfolio of Naval Affairs.

“(Signed) MOLE.”

III.

“I entreat your majesty to accept my resignation and to inform me into whose hands I am to deliver the portfolio of the Home Department. Allow me, sire, to request the favour of your majesty's permission to retire altogether into private life. As a deputy I shall endeavour to serve my king and my country with the utmost devotion.

“(Signed) LAINE.”

IV.

“I am informed that the Duke de Richelieu has sent in his resignation to the King. If your majesty decides on accepting it, I beg to solicit the favour of being also allowed to place my own at your majesty's feet. I

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

"Of all these letters, I replied only to that of the Duke de Richelieu, to whom I wrote that, in the difficulty into which his unexpected proceeding had thrown me, I found it impossible to give a definite answer, and that I wished to see him before he came to a final resolution. He came accordingly on Tuesday afternoon. I did not hide from him any portion of the pain I and I begged him to consider, that, besides my regret in being with him, I felt myself reduced to the disagreeable necessity of having recourse to ———. He listened to me

know too well that under such circumstances my presence in the ministry would be more injurious than useful to your majesty's service. Your majesty knows my unlimited devotion. If I lose the happiness of serving your majesty as a minister, I shall still have the consolation of manifesting on all occasions as a deputy the sentiments and principles which I shall never cease to retain in my heart.

"(Signed) PASQUIER."

V.

"A letter from Count Molé to Baron Pasquier informs me that the Duke de Richelieu has prayed your majesty to accept his resignation. This determination, should it be irrevocable and have the consent of the King, will oblige me to lay at his feet the portfolio which he has had the goodness to confide to me for the last three years. Nothing in the world could induce me to remain an instant in the ministry after the Duke de Richelieu. Your Majesty who knows my resolution on this subject, has often approved it. I am the more bound to this course in as much as the differences of opinion upon some points, or rather upon one point, between the ministers, and particularly between the Duke de Richelieu and myself, can alone have led to this determination. At the moment this difference began to appear, I intimated to your majesty and to the Duke de Richelieu my intention to retire. This resolution I must now carry into effect: that I may not deprive your majesty of the duke's services, certain as I am that your majesty and the Duke de Richelieu are convinced that both will at all times find me ready, out of the ministry as well as in it, to do everything which may be useful to the service of your majesty and to the success of your government, to which I shall always belong, both in wishes and intentions, as I shall belong in heart and soul to your majesty as long as I shall have a drop of blood in my veins.

"I am now going to the Duke de Richelieu to give him the last proof of the self-denial which I shall always evince in your majesty's service.

"(Signed) DECAZES."

with an air of affliction as deep as my own. We separated without coming to any conclusion, and the next morning I received the following letter from him :

"Your Majesty may very well conceive the painful situation in which our conversation of yesterday, has left me, and all I have suffered in witnessing the sorrow I caused your majesty. I know too well my insufficiency in such difficult circumstances, and in a description of affairs for the nature of which it is impossible for any one to be less fitted than I am, not to repeat to your majesty what I had the honour of saying to you yesterday. My mission terminated when the great state affairs with the foreign powers were brought to a conclusion. Those of the interior as well as the management of the Chambers are altogether foreign to my capacity, and for their management I have neither aptitude nor ability. It is my duty to inform your majesty, with all the sincerity of my heart, that in retaining me, you do the greatest injury to your affairs and those of the country, and that the sentiment which your majesty had the goodness yesterday to call modesty, is only the result of a thorough knowledge of myself. To think otherwise would be nothing but an inexcusable presumption on my part.

"After having made this profession of faith to your majesty, on which I beg of you to reflect most seriously, I ought to inform you, that if your majesty persists in retaining me, in spite of the powerful reasons I have given, I cannot, and ought not to refuse ; but that my services may not be rendered useless from the outset it will be necessary to establish in the ministry a unity of opinions which no longer exists. Your Majesty knows that I like and esteem M. Decazes. My sentiments are, and always will be, the same. But on the one hand, insulted without cause by a party whose imprudences have caused so many evils, it is impossible for him to act with it ; on the other hand, driven towards a party whose doctrines threaten us still more, so long as he shall not be employed out of France in important functions, all those men opposed to the ministry will consider him as the object of their hopes, and he will doubtless become, in spite of himself, an obstacle to the progress of government. It is with pain that I am obliged to hold this

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

language to the King. Intrigue, ambition, and the means that they ordinarily employ are certainly foreign to my nature; but, I owe the truth to your majesty, such at least as I believe it to be. I feel how painful the sacrifice of which I speak will be to the King, to M. Decazes, and if I may say so, to myself; but I think it indispensable if I am to remain in the management of affairs. The embassy to Naples, or to St. Petersburg, and his departure, announced to take place in a week; such are, in my opinion, the necessary preliminaries, I do not say to success, but to the progress of the administration. Your Majesty knows how ill it would become me to impose such conditions. The unpleasant situation in which I placed the King yesterday, and the despair to which he reduced me, have alone compelled me to confide them to his breast. Your Majesty will make such use of them as you may think proper.

"In the event of your majesty imperatively calling upon me to remain, I would venture to beg of you to use every effort in your majesty's power to retain M. Lainé, without whom I absolutely cannot continue in the ministry, and M. Roy; if your majesty will but employ that seductive manner which no one can resist, I think it will not be difficult to conquer their opposition. Having thus expressed my thoughts to you, suffer me, sire, to throw myself at your majesty's feet, to ask you with the most earnest entreaties to grant me my liberty; I repeat that I have neither the capacity nor the talents necessary to unravel the labyrinth of the government of the Chambers. Nothing has ever prepared me for this sort of life, and most certainly I shall not succeed in it. Your Majesty is warned beforehand: do not subject yourself to the pain of soon witnessing the fulfilment of these predictions."

"I was, I repeat, resigned to see M. Decazes go out of the ministry; but such a removal was, it may well be believed, much more painful. I wrote to him instantly, but I had not, I confess, the courage to make him acquainted *in extenso* with the letter I have just transcribed, I merely communicated to him the essential point. He flattered himself that his removal from Paris would be sufficient, and in his reply he offered to depart instantly to go and pass three months at Libourne with

his family. Though this offer was so perfectly reasonable, and I will even say so perfectly generous, I did not much flatter myself that it would be accepted. I resolved, however, to try it; the Duke de Richelieu having come to me a little before the meeting of the council, I opened the matter to him, accompanying it with everything I thought capable of lulling the storm. But *this seductive manner which no one can resist* failed of its effect. The Duke de Richelieu influenced by some foreign impulsion was altogether out of his natural character. He was insensible to the situation of Madame Decazes, who was only sixteen years of age, in delicate health, and at the time four months advanced in her pregnancy. He persisted in making a journey to Russia, the *sine qua non* of his continuance in the ministry, and required that after the council I should demand of Count Decazes his final resolution. Resolved as I was to sacrifice everything to retain the Duke de Richelieu, I undertook the commission, and I fulfilled it; but I confess that in pronouncing to my friend a sentence so cruel for him, and so painful to myself, my firmness abandoned me, and I broke into tears. My victim only thought to assuage my grief, and only spoke to me of his resignation. A moment after, however, the thought of the fatigues and even the dangers which she whom he loved, and with so much reason, was about to incur, came to his recollection, and exclaiming: 'Oh! my poor little wife!' he also burst into tears. He speedily recovered his firmness however, and left me to write to the Duke de Richelieu that he agreed to everything.

"On the same day, about three hours after this most distressing scene, I received the addresses of the two Chambers, in reply to my opening speech, on which occasion I was obliged to exhibit a countenance, calm, serene, and even satisfied, for after all the addresses were good; and yet we are envied!

"The following day, the 24th, the Duke de Richelieu, resuming his proper character, either of his own accord, or by the counsel of M. Lainé, who, it is said, forcibly represented to him the harshness of his requirements, was content to accept the journey to Libourne. But other embarrassments were soon brought upon him. He had calculated that with the exception of M.

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

Décazes, and perhaps of Marshal Gouvion, the council would remain as it was; but M. Lainé, though he wished for a change in the law of election, formally declared that he never would present one to supersede that which was his own work, and which he had so successfully defended. M. Roy declared that he would not remain without M. Decazes, and the others also refused. On the 25th, the Duke de Richelieu and M. Lainé, having met M. Decazes with me, after mass, proposed that he himself should form a ministry, and on his absolute refusal, they came and begged of me to induce him to do it. Although I approved of his resolution, I replied that I would speak to him, but that I was quite certain beforehand that I should not have any more success than themselves. Accordingly I sent for him, and his answer was just as I had anticipated. The Duke de Richelieu then resolved to form a new ministry altogether, and the following is the distribution of the departments he proposed to adopt:—justice, M. Siméon; war, General Lauriston; naval affairs, M. de Vilèlle; home department, M. Cuvier; finance, M. Mollien; general direction of the police, under the authority of the president of the council, M. de Tournon, prefect of the Gironde. One alone of all these names displeased me; but I had resolved to make no difficulties whatever, and moreover, after having made the greatest of all sacrifices, could I suffer myself to be stopped by a secondary one? On the evening of the 25th, the Duke de Richelieu thought himself sure of success, but insurmountable difficulties soon offered themselves. M. Cuvier made the same objection as M. Lainé; M. Mollien, who had entered, it is said, into other engagements, absolutely declined; M. Lauriston alone accepted. I was indirectly informed of this on the 26th, and in the evening I received the following letter from the Duke de Richelieu.

“I have again made fruitless efforts for the formation of a ministry which might offer to your majesty and to France some guarantees in the crisis which now besets us. M. Roy, whom I thought indispensable in the finance department, has declined all my solicitations; my other colleagues could not agree upon the measures to be pursued, and I find myself again

under the necessity of supplicating your majesty to relieve me from a task which it is impossible for me to accomplish with success. I have evinced, sire, the most absolute devotion in twice attempting to re-form a ministry, and your majesty will recollect what I had the honour of saying to you on my departure for Aix-la-Chapelle, and what I have taken the liberty of repeating to you, verbally and in writing, since my return, that I was not fitted for the management of internal affairs, and that my mission was properly at an end at the moment of concluding the negotiations with the foreign powers. But why does your majesty consider it indispensable to send for ——— to succeed me? Is there no one in the kingdom then but him and me that can be placed at the head of the Council? And if we both failed must the state necessarily perish? I cannot believe it. There are both marshals and peers of France who could certainly replace us. Without naming others, could not Marshals Macdonald and Marmont be selected? They know both the country and the army; they would inspire no distrust to the foreign powers. I repeat to your majesty that I can no longer charge myself with a task which I am incapable of fulfilling after such fruitless efforts. It is, therefore, with pain, but with decided resolution, that I supplicate your majesty to accept my resignation, and to accept at the same time the homage, &c."

"This letter was too decided; and the resolution of the Duke de Richelieu too loudly called for by circumstances to render it possible for me to seek any longer to retain him. I therefore, with the most sincere regret, accepted his resignation. His letter had imparted to me a ray of light by enabling me to see the possibility of doing without ———. But I was not, therefore the less embarrassed; for neither one nor the other of the marshals of whom the Duke de Richelieu spoke was, in my opinion, in a condition to succeed him. The keeper of the seals came to me at the moment I had sent off my answer to the Duke de Richelieu: I opened my mind to him on the position of affairs. He went immediately to find the Count Decazes, and the latter conceived the idea of confiding the helm to General Dessolles. I approved of this idea, and

commissioned him to carry it into effect, at the same time naming to him MM. de Jaucourt and De Serres. On the following morning (Sunday the 27th) he saw the general, and made the proposition to him, which was accepted. The Count Decazes was in ecstasy, and did not anticipate the difficulties which were about to arise. The Marquis Dessolles wishing, reasonably enough, to form his own ministry himself, proposed at first M. de Serres for justice, and Baron Louis for finance. He spoke to them on the subject, and all three agreed to accept the nomination, but with this condition, as a *sine qua non*, that Count Decazes should form a part of the ministry. When they made the proposition to him he rejected it with energy, and even with tears; till at length the Marquis Dessolles came to beg of me to vanquish his resistance.

"If I had only consulted my own feelings I could have wished that M. Decazes, uniting, as he always had the intention of doing, his fate with that of the Duke de Richelieu, should leave the ministry with him. But, in the first place, if the Duke de Richelieu went out it was not because he preferred repose to office, but because his ministerial capability was exhausted: secondly, he had separated his fate from that of the Count Decazes, by requiring his retirement, whilst he retained all his other colleagues; and thirdly, Count Decazes found himself in some respect in the same position as when I had proposed to him the Russian embassy: in both cases, the existence of the ministry depended on his acceptance, and if he had before sacrificed his happiness to it, should he not now also yield to it scrupulously henceforward vain? These considerations determined my judgment. The Count Decazes acquiesced, and the ministry was formed. I must add that this ministry had the entire approbation of the Duke de Richelieu, who told me so the first time I saw him again; and who, having come to himself, has not ceased personally when in Paris, and since by his letters, to evince to Count Decazes that friendship which had always united them.

"Should this little work find some readers, even the most decided opponent will doubtless see in it some singular events,

Confidential narrative of Louis XVIII.

but I venture to believe that he will also see in it that all the intrigues that were said to have accompanied them have never existed, and are nothing but the pure invention of party spirit, so fertile in such calumnies."

BOOK THIRTY-SIXTH.

1818-19.—State of France.—Struggle of parties.—The Press.—The *Minerve*; P. L. Courier.—The *Conservateur*; Chateaubriand, Lamennais, De Bonald.—Opening of the Session.—Vote of a national recompense to M. de Richelieu.—Barthélemy's proposition on the Electoral law.—Discussion on the recall of banished persons.—M. de Serres.—Increasing agitation of public opinion.—Development of journalism: the *Courrier*, the *Constitutionnel*, the *Censeur*, the *Débats*, the *Quotidienne*, the *Drapeau Blanc*.—Stormy debates on the massacres of the South: parliamentary exposures.—Various associations; the missions, the secret societies of Brussels, and of Paris; fermentation in Germany.—Elections of 1819; nomination of Grégoire; General Foy.—General spirit of the elections, hostile to the crown.—Ministerial changes, opening of the session; exclusion of Grégoire.—Project for modifying the electoral law.

I.

WE have seen, by this confidential revelation of the King to posterity, even to the very bottom of his soul: his passion for the liberation of the territory, his sincere desire to found a representative government under the authority of the crown, moderated by the Chambers, and inspired by public opinion; his secret troubles in a palace where his contested will found political opposition so near to his heart; his considerate esteem for the Duke de Richelieu; and finally his almost paternal solicitude for M. Deçazes, the instrument of his thoughts, and the attachment of his heart. The visit of Alexander, and the moral approbation which this prince had so decidedly evinced at Paris of the wisdom and ministry of the King, the more strongly confirmed him in his resolution of consolidating and developing the charter. The triumph he had obtained over the retrograde and reactionary royalists in the elections of September, by removing at the same time the Bonapartists

The Press

and the ultras, made him hope for a similar result in the elections of 1818, by which one-fifth of the Chamber was to be renewed.

But already the parties, separated for a moment by the ordinance of the 5th of September, began to evince an intention of enthralling the King and struggling with each other, and both against him in the assembly. The free press afforded them courage, a field of battle, and weapons to wield. Infuriated journals and pamphlets, which all made use of the King's name to win over, or to calumniate him, fanned the flame of opposition to the government in all the electoral colleges. The *Minerve* and the *Conservateur*, two periodical papers, constituted the manual of the passions. The *Minerve* was conducted by writers who had served the cause of despotism under the Empire, and who could not bear the idea of perishing with it. They transformed themselves into puritans of the charter; and undertook to blend in one adulterate alloy, patriotism, military spirit, the glory of conquest, the doctrines of the revolution of 1789. the souvenirs of the republic, the national pride, constitutional royalty, despotism and liberty, with such a fumble of ideas, and such perfidious artifice that every passion hostile to the Bourbons found at once in their pages some cause of joy, some souvenir, some hope, some aliment. The principal editors of this paper were Benjamin Constant, Etienne, Jouy, Pagès, Aignan, Courrier, Béranger, writers, publicists, pamphleteers, poets, men of various talents: some affecting moderation; others embittering invective; one party mingling with adulation of the King deadly insinuations against his family; another, publishing correspondence in which they debated, as tribunes of the people, questions of constitutional law; some indulging in moving apotheoses of exiles of the convention, and soldier-labourers weeping the loss of their country in the forests of America; others, as Courrier, provoking the bitter laugh of irony in pamphlets whose wit was sharpened by hatred; others, finally, like Béranger, nationalising contempt for the Bourbons in immortal songs, which created for the people a religion of glory, consoling to honour, but fatal to liberty. These men called themselves *Independents*, dissembling thus their opposi-

The Conservateur and its writers.

tion. A cloud of journals, periodicals, pamphlets, and tracts of similar genius received from them the inspiration and the direction, sowing everywhere the seeds of disdain, repugnance, and anger amongst the people.

II.

The *Conservateur*, established by M. de Chateaubriand and his friends, with the triple object of counterbalancing the Bonapartist journals, of defending the monarchy of the Bourbons, and of enslaving the King to the royalists, was written by MM. de Chateaubriand, De Lamennais, and De Bonald, wits or geniuses of powerful stamp and lofty fame. Their literary greatness was reflected in their works; their pages were enlightened by their names, and became events for Europe. Fiévée, an old prefect under Bonaparte, lent them his administrative experience, and that sophistical theory, so dear to all aristocracies, of provincial federalism, in opposition to the concentration and unity of ministerial power. M. de Suleau, a young writer divided between politics and literature—M. de Frénilly, a traditional poet—M. de Fitzjames, a courtier with an independent heart, whose royalism was expressed in the accents of liberty—M. de Castelbajac—M. de Salaberry—and all the men of the aristocracy, illustrious for personal talent, struck their blow and signalised their name in this ultra-royalist cry of alarm. The agreement of doctrines more or less absolute, more or less constitutional, mattered but little to these leaders of public opinion, the mass constituted strength, the genius made the splendour. No periodical writing ever had more. Never was a government hardly re-established more violently assailed, and more bitterly insulted by the jealousy and the ambition of its pretended exclusive friends. M. Decazes was held up in it sometimes to the suspicions, sometimes to the derision, of the royalists, and the King himself was scarcely spared. The court, the private circle of the Count d'Artois, and the provincial aristocracy were intoxicated with these names, these doctrines, and these invectives, which seemed to them to shed a lustre on their cause, and to raise

Removal of the Count d'Artois from the command of the National Guards

their obscurity to the elevation of genius. M. de Chateaubriand with an artifice somewhat illogical, but sincere in his soul, and readily accepted by the parties, associated in the *Conservateur* the theories of the old dominant church, and the old feudal monarchy, with the roughness of a manly royalist opposition to the King. He taught the anti-royalist opposition all that they might soon venture to dare in bitter criticism of the government. No liberal paper ever struck so high, or wounded so cruelly, as this discontented soldier of royalty. This fury of Chateaubriand and the party of the Count d'Artois against the opinions and the adherents of the King, decided M. Lainé on a bold and constitutional act against a court faction which threatened the crown with so much audacity. He deprived this faction of its chief, by removing the Count d'Artois from his most important functions, as commandant-general of the National Guard of the kingdom. The King after some resistance of feeling to the severity of his duty as a monarch, granted to his ministers this measure of just reprisal, which became one of the most bitter grievances of the royalists against him. The palace was split into two factions animated more and more against each other.

Public opinion in the provinces, excited in two opposing currents, by this rage of the royalist party, by these pamphlets of the liberal party, and by these intestine divisions of the royal family, diverted the elections of this year from the centre where M. Lainé and the King wished to maintain them. The liberal party was strengthened by twenty-two deputies hostile to the monarchy of the Bourbons. M. de Lafayette, the undecided symbol if not of a republic, at least of revolution, was elected as a living challenge to royalty; Manuel, the promoter of Napoleon in 1815, as an imperial protest against the Bourbons. The elections of that year, while they were satisfactory to the King by the removal of some ultra-royalists, which weakened the cabal of his brother in the Chamber, alarmed him by the accession of men too significant amongst the avowed enemies of his house. M. Lainé was disquieted. The Duke de Richelieu, who had promised the Emperor Alexander to snatch the helm alike from revolutionists and

Position of M. Decazes.

counter-revolutionists, anxiously communed with himself. "I see with alarm," he said, "the advent of men of the hundred days. They have already ruined our position in Europe. We must guard against revolutions; they would consume our national strength, and furnish Europe with grievances against us!" From this day forward he inclined towards a junction with the royalists. M. Decazes, on the contrary, threatened by them more and more, had no other asylum than in the liberal party; and became, in spite of himself, more a party leader than a minister. His colleagues became alarmed at a line of conduct which threatened to remove the centre of the monarchy from its equilibrium, to place it on the brink of a precipice in the midst of its national enemies. They conferred with each other, unknown to M. Decazes, on these tendencies and these dangers. The Duke de Richelieu was the personal friend of M. Decazes, he had no distrust of him, but of his position; he felt the propriety of leaving a friend to the King, and to the ministry a medium of communication, at once safe and all powerful, between the heart of this prince and his ministers. He endeavoured to conciliate what he wished to grant to monarchical opinion, and to yield to the King himself, by suppressing the police department occupied by M. Decazes, an occult ministry which gave umbrage to the royalists, and by leaving to him the purely administrative government of the interior. M. Decazes, foreseeing and anticipating this proposition, himself adroitly offered his resignation to his colleagues, to leave them full liberty for their new combination. But this resignation, an apparent sacrifice to concord which the young minister made of his own accord, could no longer be accepted. Having taken root in the heart of the King, whose friendship assumed the character of fatality, popular with the liberal party, which could agitate France even to the endangering of the throne, and which was then only calmed by his voice, master of the *Doctrinaire* party which excited public opinion through the press, and which negotiated with all the other parties by intrigue, M. Decazes was an embarrassing but an indispensable man to his colleagues. With one foot in the King's cabinet, and the other in popular favour,

Meeting of the Chambers.

he could only quit the government to become a formidable leader of opposition in the Chambers, or a source of regret, still present and still menacing to his colleagues, in the confidence of the King. They, therefore, declined the resignation of M. Decazes, and confined themselves to accepting that of M. Corvetto, the ministerial restorer of our credit and our finances, exhausted with labour and disappointment. He was succeeded by M. Roy, a man of immense fortune, gained by intelligent industry applied to the acquirement of wealth. A financier by profession, conservative through interest, a moderate in principle, M. Roy, suited all parties without giving umbrage to any.

III.

The ministry, thus itself in a state of suspense, met the Chambers on the 10th of December. The King in his speech congratulated himself on the liberation of the territory, and gave an indirect warning to those revolutionary passions which had signalised their revival in the last elections. The intention of modifying the electoral law, already entertained by the King, by M. de Richelieu, M. Lainé, and M. Molé, revealed itself in this speech. The chiefs of the royalist party in the Chamber required this measure, as the condition of their supporting government. The Chamber, however, worked upon by the leaders of the party of M. Decazes, showed an unexpected sign of repulsion to this plan of modification, by nominating to its committees the deputies most determined on maintaining the law as it stood. At the same time the Chamber of Peers, excited by the Count d'Artois, by M. de Chateaubriand, and by some bishops, nominated to all its parliamentary functions the most decidedly retrograde royalists. M. de Richelieu and his colleagues, seeing in this irreconcilable tendency on one side the presumed manœuvres of M. Decazes in the Chamber of Deputies, and on the other the triumphant manœuvres of the Count d'Artois and the royalists of his court in the Chamber of Peers, retired in mass before this contradictory position of the two Chambers. M. Decazes himself, whether he had really conspired against his colleagues, or whether he had

Change of ministry.

been merely served improperly or beyond his wishes, by his friends the *Doctrinaires*, placed his resignation in the hands of the King. In the confidential memoir we have just produced may be seen all the phases of this ministerial crisis.

The Chamber in its reply to the King's speech, declared in a phrase conceived like a menace, that it would reject every law which might be at variance with the spirit of the charter. This was protesting beforehand against any ministry which should touch the electoral law. The Duke de Richelieu, after some fruitless attempts to patch up his ministry with the addition of M. Villèle, leader of the moderate royalists in the Chamber, felt his physical powers give way under his mental agitation. M. Decazes, the natural heir of his indecision, wished for by the King, the hope of the liberals, accepted by the Chamber, re-formed the government. He took the home department: he gave the department of foreign affairs, and the presidency of the cabinet to General Dessolles, a disgraced military man under Napoleon, and a confidant of the manœuvres of M. de Talleyrand in 1814 for the recall of the Bourbons to the throne; the department of justice to M. de Serres, an orator as eloquent in speech and as elevated in mind as M. Lainé; the finance department to M. Roy; that of war to Marshal Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, to whom the military forces of France owed their recruiting and their re-organisation. His youth, and a proper estimate of his position, alone prevented M. Decazes from taking the title of President of the Council of Ministers: but he was more—he was the creator and the necessity of the government. His triumph exalted the liberals and confounded the royalists. Their anger against him was irritated by all that envy which attaches itself to new men.

The two Chambers, appreciating the services which the Duke de Richelieu had rendered the country in his negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle, voted him, in spite of his refusal, a donation of 50,000 francs annual income. The Duke, though deprived of fortune proportioned to the splendour of his name, not daring to reject this national munificence, accepted it to transfer it immediately to the hospitals of Bordeaux. Two thousand millions of francs had passed through his hands

M. Barthélemy.

almost without control, during his ministry and his transactions with the European powers; and his country was bound to think of him more than he did of himself.

IV

Meanwhile the result of the last election had been no less a warning to impartial statesmen than a cause of alarm to the ultra-royalists. The dangers of the monarchy were the conversation of all the coteries of the two Chambers. The Chamber of Peers, less changeable in thought than the elective chamber, corresponded more by its nature with the pre-occupations of the monarchical mind. The dominant party in this chamber were too openly connected with the court of the Count d'Artois not to make it evident that a motion made by it in appearance, emanated in reality from the prince himself. It was necessary, therefore, to find an independent organ, free from the suspicion of familiarity and complaisance to the court, to give a colouring of wisdom and public safety to the first attack on the electoral law. One was found in M. Barthélemy.

This gentleman, nephew to the celebrated writer of the same name, had all the requisites of apparent neutrality between the parties. Heir to his uncle's fame, and a diplomatist at the time of the revolution, the different phases of the republic had left him abroad, serving his country, without participating in the excesses, the passions, and the resentments of the different parties which contended for its possession. His fortunate negotiations had been repaid by the general and impartial esteem of the nation. Placed at the summit of affairs at the epoch of the Directory, driven thence into proscription under suspicion of royalism, M. Barthélemy was amongst those senators who had only to follow the dictates of their hearts, to welcome back with the Bourbons in 1814 the souvenirs and attachments of their early years. Those members of the Chamber of Peers who constituted the Cardinalist party, after its leader, Cardinal de Beaussset, other members of this chamber, amongst the most temperate in opinion, such as M. de Fontaines, M. de Pastoret, M. de

His proposition to amend the electoral law.

Verac, and finally M. de Talleyrand himself, weary of his inactivity, and desirous of seeking importance even by the side of ultra royalists, came to an understanding with the courtiers of the Count d'Artois, and easily induced M. Barthélemy by appealing to his foresight, to propose a vague and indefinite modification of the electoral law. M. de Lally-Tollendal, a verbose and declamatory orator, who loved to flatter the most prevalent opinions and to serve the ministry, opposed this proposition. M. Decazes called it the most fatal which could issue from an assembly attached to the monarchy, and calculated to alarm the country on the irrevocable nature of the King's promises. M. de Pastoret pressed the motion with the authority of an avowed moderation, and a long experience of revolutions. An immense majority of the Chamber defeated the objections of ministers and the motion was carried. The humiliation of the ministry was profound, and the triumph of the friends of the Count d'Artois complete. The King himself wavered in his conviction, on hearing so many members of the Chamber, experienced and impartial, call upon him to save his crown, and to accept with courage the unpopularity of such a measure to prevent the outbreak of revolution in the committees. M. Decazes found it necessary to strengthen the resolution of the prince, and to supplicate him to defer all change, at least until the test of a third renewal of the fifth part of the elective chamber. Liberal opinion, not content with this victory obtained for it in the council of the King by M. Decazes, wished to consecrate it by an energetic reply of the deputies to the rash demand of the peers. M. Laffitte opposed the proposition, which was considered violent and irritating by the ministerial centre of the Chamber, and rejected without a division.

V.

The discussion of M. Barthélemy's proposition in the Chamber of Peers, brought out every thing of a counter-revolutionary tendency in one party, and of the terror of being unseated in the other: M. de Fontanes cited Napoleon supporting himself on the aristocracy of fortune, and claiming

Creation of new peers.

the great landed proprietors as the only props of his throne. "Their interest is mine; those who possess the soil do not wish that it should be shaken," Lanjuinais saw in the proposition the first act of the counter-revolution against the charter. He denounced the ultra-royalist committees in the departments. "They have," he said, "their secret assemblies, their secret armies, their private rallying signs, their pay, and their arms!" General Dessolles, president of the council of ministers, deplored this manifestation of the imprudent friends of royalty, and depicted public agitation flying from province to province at the noise of this fatal discussion. M. Decazes, driven into the extreme parties by the extremity of the peril into which the peerage was throwing the government, proposed to the King to recall to the Chamber of Peers all the members of this assembly struck off by M. de Talleyrand after the hundred days. This would be more than pardoning, it would be legalizing the interregnum of the 20th March, and making the King the ally of his enemies. The president of the council, more calm and politic, limited himself to asking the King to restore harmony between the two deliberative bodies, by creating sixty-three new peers, devoted to the personal policy of his ministers. This was repeating, after a short interval, under the inspiration of the favourite, and in his favour, the *coup d'état* of the 5th September. The new peers, marshals, generals, functionaries of the Empire, or friends of the minister, were all chosen by him, for the support of his dominating influence at the Luxembourg. The King felt this so thoroughly, that before he signed the list he included in it one or two court names, "in order," he said with gentle irony to M. Decazes, "that there may, at least, be some one belonging to me amongst those belonging to you."

VI

This was an abuse of favour, and a defiance of public opinion. The royalists responded to it by a menace of exposure and an accusation of high treason. Moderate opinion saw in it the independent equilibrium of the powers arbitrarily

Debates upon the press.

broken by the ministers, the prerogative of the King exhausted by one stroke of the pen, by the introduction of a mass of new men into a senate wherein the wisdom of the monarch ought to economise his favours and his influence, by rare and partial nominations; the peerage entirely delivered over to a single party, not too safe or too well affected to the crown, and to serve only one occasion; finally, the royal patronage become that of M. Decazes by this profuse bestowal of the peerage on his personal friends. The King's enemies alone rejoiced at this excess of boldness which saved a minister by compromising royalty. The Barthélemy proposition which had been carried in the Chamber of Peers prior to this new increase of the peerage was discussed, according to the constitution, in the Chamber of Deputies. Opposed by M. de Labourdonnaie, M. de Villèle, M. de Corbière, and by M. Lainé himself, who wished to defend the constitution by constitutional measures and not by violent acts of prerogative, it was defeated in this Chamber. But in order to throw it out, the minister had been compelled to avail himself of the eloquence and the votes of the enemies of royalty. His triumph was also that of the radical opposition. Desperate coalitions of this nature furnish governments with victories more ruinous than defeats. M. Decazes, in spite of himself, was drawing the King towards the revolutionists, instead of attracting the revolutionists towards the King.

VII.

The stormy debate upon the regulated liberty of journalism, and on the recall of banished persons, called forth the lofty eloquence of M. de Serres, a man whose parliamentary fame was daily on the increase.

This gentleman seemed destined by greatness of mind and talent, to accomplish, after an exhausted revolution, what Mirabeau had attempted too soon, or too late in the ascending and convulsive period of that revolution,—the treaty of peace between representative liberty and hereditary monarchy. Royalist from birth, religious from instinct, liberal from reason,

Speech of M. de Serres.

constitutional from theory, impassioned in his eloquence, moderate in his character, grand in accent, attractive in warmth, and rich in imagination, M. de Serres constituted the fidelity, the strength, and the splendour of the ministry. He had leaned, at the commencement of the session, towards the liberal side, because the royalist party seemed to him bent on violence and oppression. He had in his acts and speeches given pledges to loyal democracy, and had been as often applauded by the left of the Assembly as by the right and centre. It was felt that his eloquence soared above the passing interest of his ministerial position, and flowed from his mind with all the freedom of the philosopher, the statesman, and the citizen. No one had evinced more confidence than he had, in the government of opinion by opinion, or conceded more to the spirit of the times all the liberty compatible with social order and representative monarchy. His was the genius of 1789, purified by experience, heedful of the rocks, and expressed in the most splendid eloquence, the echoes of which have ever excited an assembly. The Restoration had found its fitting organs in M. Lainé and M. de Serres.

But when the liberal party, encouraged by the temerity of M. Decazes, passed the bounds which M. de Serres had fixed to his concessions, became aggressive, and wished to force from the King humiliating disavowals of his first act of 1815 M. de Serres, repulsed by these requirements of the liberals, began to distrust both them and M. Decazes, and to fall back, by little and little, upon the moderate royalists of the party of M. Lainé and of M. de Villèle. The discussion on the recall of banished persons rent still further the recent amity between M. de Serres and the liberals. Assailed by voices from the left, loudly demanding the return of the regicides: "When that deplorable day, the 20th March," replied M. de Serres, "appeared amidst the general consternation, and the joy of a small number of seditious persons—when Europe was shaken from the confines of Asia to the shores of the ocean—when France saw herself invaded by millions of foreign soldiers—when she was despoiled of her wealth and her monuments, and when her territory was dismembered—every one felt that the

Its effects.

first necessity of the state was to defend its monarchy by severe and preservative measures from new calamities: then arose the question whether the individuals who had concurred by their votes in the death of Louis XVI. should be removed from the French territory. Every one knows with what generous persistence the royal will struggled against the motion for their banishment. Men, known for their unbounded devotion to the royal cause and to constitutional principles, supported the proposition of entire amnesty made by the King. But when it was otherwise decided, when the sentence had been pronounced, that sentence was irrevocable. The extreme generosity of the King might have defended the voters; but the law having passed, it ought to be felt that it was impossible, without violating the most powerful moral sentiment, without impairing the royal dignity in the eyes of France and of Europe, ever to exact from the King a formal act, which should restore their country to the assassins of his brother, of his predecessor, of the just man crowned. We must therefore draw a distinction between the individuals affected by Article XI. of the law of 1816, and those who voted for the death of Louis XVI. As to the first we must have full confidence in the clemency of the King; as to the regicides, *never!*"

This Draco-like word, so contrary to the wish of Louis XVI expressed in his last testament, and to the sentiments manifested on his return by the King himself, opened an abyss between the left side of the Assembly and the minister. In pronouncing it M. de Serres yielded himself up to the animosity of the revolutionary party. His services to the cause of moderation and of freedom were forgotten. It was not an arbiter but an instrument that the party of the revolution wanted in M. de Serres, and the moment he refused to lend himself to the requirements of that party he was abandoned by the left. The right rejoiced at the rupture, but it still only accepted with distrust the powerful auxiliary that presented itself in him.

VIII.

This conflict of opinions, antipathies, dissertations, sarcasms, hatreds, provocations, and invectives, which excited and disgraced the tribune, was prolonged from without in the journals, which the freedom conferred upon the press multiplied in number and increased in bitterness. All the literary talents of the time assumed, for the advancement of their cause, an incessant system of polemics which changed all conversation into controversy. The public mind, so long repressed by arms and despotism, gushed forth in a thousand voices. Every breast was filled with the enthusiasm of a new era. The whole of France was fermenting with ideas, ardour, zeal, and passions, which the Revolution, the Empire, and the Restoration brought face to face, and to which the elections, the assemblies, and the journals offered an arena whereon to combat or conciliate. Each camp of public opinion had its writers, paid in popularity or favour according to the cause to which they devoted themselves. M. Decazes was defended in the *Moniteur*, in the *Journal des Maires*, and in the *Journal de Paris*, by M. Villemain and M. Linguay. Louis XVIII., himself a literary sovereign, wrote some articles by stealth, in which he was gratified to see that his hand was suspected. M. Royer Collard, M. Kératry, and M. Guizot wrote in the *Courrier*. This journal of the first *Doctrinaires*, already partook of the dogmatical gravity, the haughtiness and the disdain, which were the characteristics of this school. M. Etienne, M. Pagès, and M. Aignan, wrote in the *Constitutionnel*, a subordinate and irritating journal, which excited in the minds of the mass not elevated ideas, but vulgar discontent. This was the journal of public murmurs, not assuming any precise form of opposition, but collecting, colouring, and aggravating all it could in satire of the court, in the excesses of the ultras, the pretensions of the clergy, and the ridicule of the old regime, in disaffecting the nation to the Bourbons, and seducing it to Bonapartism, or Orleansism. M. Comte and M. Dunoyer, two young and impartial writers, through their elevation of mind as well as their

The various organs.

youth, inclined towards the republic, without confessing it even to themselves. They incited the young to think in a periodical publication entitled the *Censeur*, a happy but austere imitation of the celebrated pamphlets of England at the period when she established her liberty.

The *Journal des Debats*, but recently the privileged journal of the Empire, was directed by the Messieurs Bertin, who were more statesmen than public writers; adroit in maintaining an equilibrium of opinions, by making them naturally lean towards the side of authority, the Bertins had given up their paper to M. de Chateaubriand and his friends. Its articles, which were always sensible and sometimes brilliant, were only addressed to Europe, to the court, and to the aristocracy of letters and of the saloons. Professedly royalist, constitutional in language, and learned in diplomacy, the *Journal des Debats* never broke with the King, however it might immolate his ministers. There was always a ministerial appointment behind its opposition; it was the store-room of royalty.

The superannuated, ultra, narrow, and violent opinions of the court, of the returned clergy, and of the obsolete nobility, were embittered, consoled, and flattered by the *Quotidienne* and the *Drapeau-Blanc*, journals at once lively, aggressive, and courageous in their impotent struggle against the spirit of the age. These papers were supported by the rancour of the emigrants, protestations against the revolutionary spirit, horror of constitutional concessions, and antipathy to all new men and fresh innovations. They were astonished at still being vanquished after the triumph of the Bourbons. They turned royalism against the King; papers ill-timed and fatal in their friendship, which incessantly revealed to the revolution the secret thoughts and ultimate intentions of the counter-revolution.

IX.

Violent provocations frequently indicated in the Chamber the anger smouldering amongst the parties excited by these journals. M. d'Argenson was silenced for having made a simple allusion to the Protestant assassinations in the South.

M. Trinquelague extenuated these crimes, and almost exonerated their perpetrators. He was replied to by M. de Saint Aulaire, who testified that he had seen the dead bodies of thirteen electors, slaughtered under his own eyes, at Nîmes, and had witnessed the flight of their fellow Protestants to the mountains to escape a similar death. M. de Villèle, turning the indignation of the liberals against the ministry, said that if these murders had been really committed they ought to be punished, and he demanded why the government had not done justice. This appeal roused M. de Serres. He justly threw back the reproach upon the royalists, the tardy accusers of crimes committed while they were in power, and which these same royalists seemed now desirous of shifting upon others. "Learn," said he, "to know the real parties. General Lagarde, commanding the department of the Gard, protected public order and the citizens with his sword and his person. He received a ball in the breast from the very muzzle of a musket. The author of the crime is seized, and the fact being proved and avowed, the judges put this question: 'Was the homicide committed in self-defence?' The jury ventured to reply in the affirmative, and the murderer was acquitted.

"Another general, commanding at Toulouse, was in the act of quelling a disturbance when he was mortally wounded; he was carried into his residence, and the assassins rushed in and completed their butchery with a thousand wounds. They were brought to trial, when it was alleged in their favour that they could not kill a man who was already mortally wounded, and they were condemned to simple imprisonment!

"A man whose horrible name it is painful even to pronounce, Trestaillons, was prosecuted with his accomplices as the author of many assassinations. They were conveyed to Rome, where more independent justice was expected, but not one of the witnesses would give evidence against them; the reign of terror had frozen their courage. The witnesses in their favour, on the contrary, presented themselves in crowds, and these men were set at liberty!"

The honest indignation of M. de Serres at the impunity bestowed upon these crimes, completely silenced the royalists,

Stormy scene in the Chamber.

and renewed for a moment his popularity amongst the liberals. The homage he rendered, a few days after, to the spirit of the revolution irritated almost to frenzy the counter-revolutionary party. M. de Serres had said that majorities were almost always either sound or well-intentioned. M. de Labourdonnaye, the fiery organ of the right, called upon the minister to declare if he extended this eulogium to the majority of the Convention?

"Yes, Sir," boldly replied the orator, "even to the Convention!"

M. de Serres had scarcely fallen into the snare that was hidden in this question, when he was covered with applause from the left and from the galleries, and from the right with murmurs and insulting expressions. The Chamber, in a tumult, was obliged to suspend its sitting and to clear the galleries. One imprudent or hasty word had been enough to defeat a life of fidelity and honour. The parties defied each other in their looks, and displayed mortal hatred in their gestures; their words insulted, though they did not kill. M. Dupont (de l'Eure), the most humane of men, was compared to Marat, by M. de Puymaurin. M. de Courvoisier denounced the existence of a directing committee, charged by the revolutionary party to communicate from Paris impulse and unity of movement to the factions. The royalist party connected with the ambitious party of the church, responded to these secret societies by societies, open and encouraged, which covered all France with missionaries, at once religious and political; instruments of piety to some, of agitation to others, and frequently of scandal and sedition. Received in some places, repulsed in others, edifying in the churches, out of their element in the public places, applauded and insulted by turns, protected by the magistrates, defended by the military, these priests, wandering over the surface of the land, as through a conquered country, revealed in the motive which sent them forth less of zeal than of faction. The King and his ministers, who witnessed with repugnance these excesses of proselytism inspired by their secret enemies, did not, however, dare to repress them, lest they should be accused of indifference or

irreligion by the allies of the church. Education being confined to the ecclesiastics gave offence to the partisans of liberty of conscience, and excited tumults amongst the students in the capital and the provinces. These being convoked to sign petitions to the Chambers, were dispersed at the point of the bayonet. The opposition, thus repulsed in open day, took refuge and concentrated itself in secret societies. The spirit of conspiracy insinuated itself there under the semblance of liberalism. Public societies were organised to defend, by all legal means, the liberty of thought, of the press, and of public opinion. M.M. de Lafayette, d'Argenson, Laffitte, Benjamin Constant, Gévaudan, Mechin, Gassicourt, Merilhou, De Thiard, and De Broglie, imparted to them the influence of their names with the public. M. de Lafayette assembled at his residence more secret and more resolute committees. Every weapon of defence given to liberty by the public institutions became one of aggression in the hands of the conspirators. Some harsh correspondence took place between the refugees of the Convention who had found shelter at Brussels, and the malcontents of Paris. It was therein openly proposed to change the dynasty in France, and to give the crown to a Protestant sovereign. The King of the Netherlands smiled, it is said, upon these ideas, which intoxicated his ambition with the hope of a chimerical reign for his son, on the ruins of the house of Bourbon. The Prince of Orange courted the refugees, and negotiations were attempted between him, the refugees, and Lafayette.

With these secret plots of Paris and of Brussels, already corresponded plots of a similar nature in Germany, Spain, Piedmont, and Naples. The spirit of liberty which had excited the nations against Napoleon, and triumphed through national independence, now felt itself menaced in France; and prepared to defend itself everywhere. Carbonarism was organised in Italy, antimonachal liberalism at Cadiz, universal union in the learned cities of Germany. One of the young members of this sect, the student Sand, murdered Kotzebue in cold blood; a writer who was formerly popular, and who, it was supposed, was now sold to Russia. Sand killed himself

Fermentation of Germany.

also with the poignard he had used in killing the traitor, mingling suicide with assassination, returning thanks to God for his madness, and calling these two crimes virtue. His fanaticism excited the feverish imaginations of young men, and of women. The sovereigns, alive to these symptoms of fermentation, directed their ministers to assemble at Carlsbad to organise a collective repression against this outburst of popular opinion, and to intimidate Germany by the police and by executions. France, both liberal and revolutionary, replied by invectives and menaces to these precautions of the northern courts. Every day war was more frankly declared between the people and the sovereigns. The elections of 1819 were influenced by this general agitation of ideas, and they became more and more remarkable in the selection of names, the most hostile to the Bourbons, and to kings in general, to indicate to them both animosity and menace. This animosity was carried to delirium, and even to suicide in the liberal party. Its real interest was to come to the assistance of the ministry and the King, who had raised it out of nothing, and who made for it a rampart of the government against the triumph of the ultra-royalists. To pull down M. Decazes was to pull themselves down; to insult the King was to throw this prince into a forced alliance with the retrograde party. The liberals listened to none of these inspirations of good sense, and of gratitude. They were determined to offend the crown, and to deceive the minister, by selecting and supporting, in all places where they had a preponderance, ultra-radical candidates, of evil augury for the monarchy. The most striking of all was the election of Grégoire, at Grenoble.

X.

Grégoire, who was a philosophical priest before the revolution, faithful to christianity, but rebellious to the pontifical supremacy of Rome, had been advanced to a bishopric by the civil constitution of the clergy. Under this title, which he had never since repudiated, his name had the signification of a schism. Being a member of the national convention, on a

Election of Grégoire.

mission at the period of the King's trial, he had not voted for the death of Louis XVI., but he had ratified the sentence by an act subsequent to the execution; being thus innocent of the fact, and perhaps of the intention, but an accomplice from weakness or ambiguity in the judgment. His invectives against kings had become proverbs in revolutionary language. An apostle nevertheless of the doctrines of equality and of the gentleness of the gospel and of philosophy, Grégoire had, however, revolted against blood, and preached after the victory, justice and moderation to the conquerors. An obscure senator under the Empire, a silent enemy of despotism, he had not committed the inconsistency of hailing again on the 20th of March that military tyranny, the first fall of which he had witnessed with joy. This abstinence from all complicity with the 20th of March had shielded him from the law of banishment applied to the regicides in 1815. He lived in retirement and in silence since the second return of the Bourbons. The liberal committees of Paris could not find throughout all France a name more decidedly ill-omened to the King.

They chose him for the repulsion which this name must excite in the family of Louis XVI. The ministry and the moderate men opposed him in vain. Grenoble elected him as a retaliation for the executions effected within its walls in the name of the Bourbons. This nomination fell like a thunderbolt upon M. Decazes and upon the court. It was an impeachment of the ministry; it was a blow levelled at the face of majesty itself. A cry, almost unanimous, of astonishment and reprobation, arose from all opinions and all consciences which were not desirous of a rupture between liberty and the throne. The ultra royalists rejoiced in secret under their apparent indignation. The election of Grégoire was to them the felony of the charter and the condemnation of the favourite. Names less notorious, but nearly as hostile, issued from the electoral urns amongst the departments summoned to replace their deputies: Lambrechtz, Lecarlier, Labbey de Pompières, Sebastiani, and Mechin. General Foy, soon to be called by talent and character to so much parliamentary distinction, appeared for the first time in the representation of his country.

General Foy.

Dear to the army, chosen by the liberals, accepted by the constitutionalists, formidable but not implacable to the Bourbons, at once the leader and moderator of a legal opposition in the Chamber, his accession to the assembly was about to offer to liberty a figure unknown to the revolution, that of a military tribune in a warrior statesman. General Foy combined this double character in his person. His countenance was as open as his thoughts, honest as his heart, and inspired as his eloquence. Nature had made him a chief of party, at a time when the only patriotic party was the moderation of hearts and the conciliation of ideas. In him we remembered the soldier, we recognised the honest man, we foresaw the great citizen.

XI.

General Foy was one of the youngest soldiers of the revolution. He was born at Ham in the middle class of society, and was educated for the army. Like Bonaparte he was an officer of artillery, and served under Dumouriez, Pichegru, and Dampierre, in those first campaigns of the north when patriotism defended the soil without meddling with intestine factions. Indignant at the crimes of 1793, he was imprisoned by the proconsul Lebon for his murmurs, saved from the scaffold by his youth and his eloquence, and being released from prison by Moreau, he fought under him in Germany. He was a friend of Desaix, and being wounded by his side by a cannon ball, he employed the leisure of a tedious cure at Strasburg in the studies of a publicist and a statesman; led by mental analogy to the facts and eloquence of antiquity, he drew from those examples the love for, and the accents of liberty. He soon after obtained promotion and served under Masséna in Switzerland. Seeing in the fame of Bonaparte the dawning of a tyranny for Europe, he refused to sign the servile addresses which the flatterers of budding power hawked about the army in favour of the Empire, and was banished to Portugal and Spain in subordinate commands for this disinclination to servitude. He obeyed, without reluctance, the summons to the Bourbons and the charter in 1814, and flew to Waterloo,

General spirit of the elections.

as to the Thermopylæ of his country, but without being implicated in the defection of the hundred days, bedewing with his blood the redoubts of Quatre-Bras, he was borne in a dying state to his family after the ruin of his country. Having been disbanded in 1815, he wrote, to console himself for the public reverses, the history of his Spanish campaigns. Recommended by his patriotism to the patriots, by talent to the electoral committees, and by esteem to all, his department elected him by acclamation to reanimate the country, to defend the charter, to strengthen the constitutional throne, and to respect the King. He was soon to surpass these promises, and to accomplish all these mandates. Such was General Foy when he was called to the Chamber.

XII.

The King trembled at the advantage which the nomination of so great a number of his enemies, and especially that of Lambrechtz and of Grégoire, two shadows of the convention, would give to his brother's policy over his own. His concessions were only rewarded with insults. The election of Grenoble was a flash of light that opened his eyes. Afflicted, but not obstinate, he did not close them against any such symptom. The coolness which existed between him and his brother, since the latter had been deprived of the command of the Parisian National Guard, disappeared before this common family misfortune. "Well, brother!" said the Count d'Artois to the King, with an accent of consternation as he sat down at his table: "you see at length whither they are leading you." "I know it, brother," replied the King, softening his voice, and withholding a thought that was already on his lips: "I know it, and I shall guard against it." A long and cordial conversation appeared at length to reconcile the two branches of the family. It was admitted that a law of election which sent, in return for so many concessions, such challenges and threats to royalty, was a hint to change its course; the rock was too visible to be overlooked. In the evening M. Decazes received from the King an order to prepare the outlines of an electoral system

Mortification of the ministry.

which should preserve the crown from such manifestations of public opinion. M. Decazes, whose youth, whose interest and whose real attachment to the King, precluded an obstinate resistance to wishes which had so painful a motive, instantly resolved to satisfy the royal family. M. de Serres, who was suddenly thrown, by that impulse which constitutes the orator, from one extremity of opinion to the other, and M. Portal, minister of marine, did not hesitate in recognising the necessity of a law which should disarm their enemies. Baron Louis, minister of finance, Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, and General Dessolles persisted in defending the old law. The abuse of liberty, the misleading of public opinion were not sufficient in their ideas to condemn a whole system. The decision was adjourned. The liberals, fearful of seeing the instrument of their victory broken through the impatience of M. Decazes, overwhelmed this minister with attentions and adulation; they even went so far as to promise to obtain from Grégoire a voluntary retirement, which would leave to the crown its dignity, and to the constitutional party its law. The minister resisted all these advances, submitted the question again to his colleagues, and, supported energetically by the King himself, overcame all resistance, but received at the same time the resignations of M.M. Louis, Dessolles, and Gouvion-Saint-Cyr.

M. Decazes, the sole spring henceforward of the intestine movements of the King's council, formed a new ministry, of which he himself was the head as president of the council, and minister of the home department. M. Pasquier, who had felt more strongly than any other of the political men, the insult offered to the crown by the elections, and who had addressed to the King a secret intimation of his dangers, was called to the foreign department; being a man of flexible intellect and fluent eloquence, which gave him a great aptitude for all phases of public life, he offered to M. Decazes, a useful auxiliary both in the council and the assembly, and he was, moreover, a secret link between the court and the royalists. The statesman of the Chamber who was beginning to discipline his powers under M. de Villèle, M. de Latour-Maubourg, a military man, celebrated for his bravery and his fidelity, obtained the war-office.

Position of M. Decazes.

M. Roy, who had been already minister of finance, and superseded for a moment by the Abbé Louis, returned to that department; M. Portal took the naval affairs; M. de Serres nominally the department of justice, but in reality every department where the universality of his genius, the ardour of his zeal, and the force and promptitude of his eloquence might call him to shield from threatened danger the King, the ministry, and the constitution.

XIII.

This ministry would have been equally powerful against the radicals and the royalists, if M. Decazes had consented to go out and give his place to M. Lainé. He wanted neither strength, nor allurements, nor support amongst the new men who directed public opinion through the press, and the parties in the Chambers. But in making himself the executioner of the very law of election which had won him his popularity the year before, and which he had defended as a portion of the charter at the beginning of this, he was guilty of such an abjuration of his own principles as is generally fatal to political men. Ambition rather than conviction would be supposed to have influenced him on this occasion, whereas the real motive of his conduct was his devotion to the wishes of the King. But his increasing favouritism wounded rivalry, irritated envy, and showed in this uncontrolled direction of the government, pertinaciously left to a man who had risen from nothing so high and so suddenly, more boldness in the pursuit of fortune than prudence in waiting for and weighing its importance.

At the King's suggestion, however, he made advances to the Count d'Artois, and expressed with deference to this prince a desire to act in concert with the royalists, his friends in both Chambers. He also flattered the young adepts of the *Doctrinaire* party: MM. de Broglie, Guizot, de Barante, and de Staël; the political circle at that time of M. Royer-Collard and of M. de Serres, with the prospect of creating influential situations for them in the government. None of these negotiations were concluded, and the King opened the session on the 29th

Opening of the session.

November. His speech, maturely weighed by M. Pasquier, began by hinting at great resolutions of public safety, without, however, touching the sacredness of the charter. "The laws," said the monarch, "have been executed everywhere; but amidst these elements of public prosperity, I cannot conceal from myself that just motives of apprehension mingle with our hopes, and claim henceforward our most serious attention. A vague but a positive disquietude pre-occupies all minds. Every one demands of the present pledges of its stability. The nation but imperfectly enjoys the fruits of peace and good order; every one fears to see them snatched away by the violence of the factions; the too obvious expression of their designs is alarming. The moment is come to relieve the Chamber of Deputies from the annual agitation of parties, by assuring to it a duration more in conformity with the interests of public order, and of the internal consideration of the state."

These words boldly placed the question of the dignity of the crown in opposition to the name of the regicide by which it had been insulted. They brought forward at the same time the still more irritating question of the electoral law, by means of which the opposition was in hopes of increasing its strength. Royalty had been insulted; it did not insult but it offered combat in its turn. The Assembly understood the challenge and was thrown into a state of fermentation.

XIV.

The majority of the Assembly, however, did not refuse a legitimate satisfaction to the susceptibility of feeling and of majesty, in the sacrifice of Grégoire. M. Becquey, a worthy and pacific man, when expressing in the tribune the sentiments of the *bureau* of the Chamber, did not attack the individual, but pretended to find some material causes of nullity in the election of the deputy for Grenoble. The friend of M. Royer-Collard, and an old agent of the King's in Paris during the exile of the Bourbons, M. Becquey was desirous, as well as the King, of sparing the Chamber those questions, which were calculated to cause an explosion of anger in hearts that were

Discussion in the election of Grégoire.

boiling with party rage. But no hand, however prudent it might be, could close up this crater of the Assembly. "No! no! let us have no temporizing, no weakness!" cried several voices on the right and in the centre. "No regicides in this Chamber!" added M. de Marcellus. The murmurs increased on the left; some groups disconnected with both parties seemed to waver between the insult offered by the election of a judge of Louis XVI. as a defiance to his brother, and the excess of parliamentary power displayed in unseating a deputy of the country legally elected. It required an imposing, and until then an impartial voice, to constitute itself the arbiter between the majesty of the King, the feelings of the royal family, and the inviolability of the electors. M. Lainé slowly ascended the tribune. His countenance always grave and ascetic, wore at this moment even a sorrowful expression. He seemed to invest the mourning of offended royalty with the civil wars and scaffolds evoked by such fatal discussion. The features of this great orator were as eloquent as his language. The muscles of his thin and nervous lips palpitated with the struggling words before they could force an utterance. He was moving because he was himself moved. He possessed the eloquence of the eyes. M. Lainé, though he did not utter a syllable would have affected and convinced even by his silence.

XV

"Gentlemen," said he, after a long and painful pause which betrayed his agitation, "by a clemency almost divine, or, if you will, for the necessity or the appeasing of society, it was promised that no one should be called to account for his votes; oblivion was enjoined upon all citizens. Who, in fact, remembered the fourth deputy of the Isère? Who ever called him to account for his votes and opinions? Has oblivion then been imposed only upon the victims? And have those only who most require to be forgotten preserved the sorrowful privilege of being exclusively remembered?" This crushing style of argument which fell upon the directing committees, the authors of this premeditated insult, cut short the question, as great ora-

His rejection.

tors frequently settle points, by a single expression. The effect was immense in the Assembly, which was enthusiastic in applause on the right and in the centre, but silent and dismayed in the other parts. Benjamin Constant alone, one of those cold sophists who without sharing in party passions invest them with language of most malignant popular meaning, harassed M. Lainé with some ambiguous phrases, in which he contrasted Grégoire, who, in his opinion, was exonerated from all participation in the death of Louis XVI., sitting in the council of the nation, with Fouché himself an avowed regicide, sitting in the council of the King. This cruel, though merited allusion might degrade the crown, but it could not raise the regicide, or justify the insult to royalty. Benjamin Constant soothed the hatred of the radicals but he did not convince the Chamber. Grégoire was unanimously rejected. Some excluded him on account of the indignity, others in consequence of some irregularity in the form of election. Members were excused from assigning their motives, in order that the votes might be the more numerous, and the reparation to the crown the more unanimous.

M. Ravez, a friend of M. Lainé, and emulous of his fame, was nominated by a majority of the Chamber, and chosen by the King as its president. He distinguished himself in its thankless but important functions, which change an orator into a judge, an arbiter, and a moderator of an assembly. The party of the ultra-royalists, united with that of the moderate royalists in rivalry with the ministry, had given seventy-five votes to M. Villele; and the radical opposition party, sixty-five to M. Laffitte. These figures comprised the strength of the respective parties. The increasing opposition threatened soon to overpower the ministerial, or central party, which had only given 105 votes to M. Ravez. This balance of parties made the reply of the Assembly to the King appear weak and timid. They were sufficiently afraid of each other to adjourn the decisive struggles; that in the Chamber of Peers, which had been inspired by the energy of the Count d'Artois, declared open war against the factions.

Petitions got up by the liberal party.

XVI.

In the same manner as the liberals, the royalists were already divided into two camps, one ultra, the other moderate. A man who was increasing in importance as in wisdom, M. de Villèle, governed the latter. M. de Labourdonnaye, an eloquent man, but who was incapable of becoming wiser, animated the other. Numerous petitions, got up in the provinces by the liberal party, and conceived in terms threatening to the crown, brought on a discussion. M. Mestadier, in the name of the royalist majority, and of the centre of which he was the organ, demanded that these petitions should be treated with contempt. Dupont (de l'Eure), whose moral authority with the liberals was founded on character as well as eloquence, exposed the contradiction between M. Decazes, asserting, a few months before, the perpetuity of the electoral law, and the same M. Decazes now rejecting the petitions which demanded its duration. General Foy made his maiden speech on this occasion. He palliated, without approving of, the exaggerated and insulting terms of the petitions. "Liberty," said he, "is the youth of nations. There is too much life in the government of liberty not to excite movements sometimes to the extent of agitation." In these first words might be perceived the accents of a mind that was both free and honest. General Foy took his position on the left, as M. de Villèle did on the right, like a man who wishes to conquer, but not to degrade, the government of his country. There was in these two men a promise of two ministries for the crown; the one if the demands of the royalists drew him to the right, the other if the requirements of public opinion should precipitate him to the left. The ministry, wavering between these two groups, obtained a majority of only three votes for the rejection of the petitions. These three votes were those of the ministers themselves. They trembled for the fate of the measure which they had promised the King to carry through the Chamber. They attached themselves to all influential parties in the palace, or in

The new electoral law.

public opinion, to obtain their support. An electoral bill, projected by M. de Serres, under the supervision of the Duke de Richelieu, and drawn up by M.M. Villemain, Monnier, Barante, Guizot, and Decazes, a young party more full of zeal than conviction, was at length to be submitted to the deliberation of the Chambers. This law, devoid of importance, and without the confidence of the country, divided it into two electoral nations; the plebeian nation nominated half the deputies in the chief towns of the respective districts, and the nation of the aristocracy of wealth, composed of proprietors paying taxes to the amount of 1,000 francs, nominated the other half in the capitals of the departments. A foolish law, with all its pretended prudence, which gave to the accident of fortune, instead of the accident of birth, a title to the right of citizenship—a title of wealth still more absurd than that of nobility, for family may impart sentiments and virtues, while fortune only bestows means and comfort. This law had an additional danger; it brought face to face, in the same assembly, men issuing from two different elections, an aristocracy of department, and a democracy of district, elements of antipathy, of classification, and of civil war, which would rend the country and the government in contending against each other as representatives. Fear had badly inspired the royalists; zeal for his master had badly inspired the favourite; systems had badly inspired the *Doctrinaires*, fawned upon by all parties, which sought to conciliate them for their own advantage; ignorance of the country had badly counselled M. de Richelieu; the love of monarchy M. de Serre. This law bore in itself the germs of a struggle between classes, and the ruin of royalty. It was a constitution of defiance; in a constitution, all defiance is a provocation. M. Decazes was proceeding blindfold to the ruin of the throne which he wished to consolidate. He had made a *coup d'état* on the 5th September against the royalists; he was about to be compelled by the opposition of the Chamber to make a second against the liberals. But the *coup d'état* against the royalists only dethroned a party; that against the liberals dethroned a public opinion which had become a popular passion in the national masses. He was ruining himself, and

Impolicy of the new electoral law.

he was ruining his master, when one of those events in which fatality intervenes by the hand of crime, occurred to pull down the minister, to destroy a prince, and to disentangle, by the stroke of a poniard, a crisis of which nobody could foresee the catastrophe.

BOOK THIRTY-SEVENTH.

The Duke de Berry—Louvel; his previous life, his monomania of regicide—He determines to kill the Duke de Berry—Night of the 13th of February—Assassination of the Duke at the Opera; his death-bed—Grief of the royal family—Consternation of the public—Accusation against M. Decazes; M. Clausel de Coussergues charges him with high treason—Violent debates; palace intrigues—Madame du Cayla; her origin; her favour—The Viscount de la Rochefoucauld—Fall of M. Decazes; review of his political career.

I.

THE Duke de Berry was the second son of the Count d'Artois, the favourite child of the royal family, and the only hope of the direct succession of his race to the throne, from the unproductive union of the Duchess of Angoulême. His worth lay more in his heart than in his appearance; for he was small in stature, with broad shoulders, awkward in his motions, a bony countenance, low forehead, shaggy eye-brows, a turned-up nose, thick lips, and a wild expression; his countenance revealed his goodness and intelligence only when lit up with a smile: then, in the frank and cordial penetration of his look, in the delicate contraction of his eye-lids, in the muscles of the mouth, in the easy freedom of gesture which gave, as it were, his heart with his hand, and in the brief and sincere quality of his voice, the prince was visible, the mind was understood, the soldier was apparent, and the heart was felt. The old sentiment of honour constituted the virtue of this prince; he had been fostered in it by that wandering and chivalrous nobility which had followed his father in his exile, and which bore with it, throughout all Europe, the frivolities, the prejudices, and the amiable vices, but also the fidelity and the self-devotion of former times. The precocious spirit, the unexpected sallies, the youthful fire

The Duke de Berry.

of the Duke de Berry, contrasted with the modest gravity and the sickly timidity of his elder brother, the Duke d'Angoulême, had proved at an early period the delight and amusement of the exiled court. He had those defects which are the luxuriance of rich natures and the augury of great qualities. They had been too readily pardoned in his family and his private circle not to become a sort of boast with himself; and his cultivated faults had thus become confirmed habits. He was one of those young men in whom everything is pardoned, and who at length think even their follies are admired from that very cause. He was, however, constant in love, firm in friendship, eager for action, and ambitious of glory, which if he did not acquire upon the field of battle, it was not his fault, but that of his destiny, which condemned him to a life of inaction. After having rivalled the ardour of the Duke d'Enghien in the army of Condé, the disarming of Germany had thrown him back upon London. He lived there in obscurity, and in the mystery of a durable attachment for a foreign lady whom, it is said, he had irregularly married. Two daughters were the fruit of this private but faithful union, and he loved them openly with the tenderness of a father. Surrounded by these ties of affection and by some gentlemen, his comrades in the old court and army of Condé, he occupied his leisure hours in manly and mental arts, for which he entertained the noble passion of Francis I. He went to Hartwell, the residence, in England, of the exiled King, only on those rare occasions when this prince summoned his family around him, to concert some political negotiations with Europe.

The fall of the empire had opened a field of action to the Duke de Berry. He was chosen by Louis XVIII., and by the Count d'Artois his father, for those martial enterprises to which his youth, his bravery, his natural soldier-like roughness, his activity, and his fire seemed to have destined him. They wished to present in him to France, and to the army, some living shadow of Henri IV.; but, however, the young prince might inherit the blood and the heart, and was, alas! to suffer the same death, he had neither the grace nor the captivating qualities of his ancestor. He mistook the proper

His unpopularity with the army.

tone in addressing himself to the army, by assuming the accents of the master and the brother in arms of those conquerors of the world, the companions of a hero, consecrated by the fire of so many battles, and embittered by their defeat, which only rendered the more susceptible how humbled and unfortunate they had been. This gave rise to unpleasant military scenes between the prince and the old soldiers of Bonaparte, and to a degree of unpopularity amongst them which had prejudiced the mind of the Duke de Berry, and thrown him into dissipation through disgust for a military life. He absented himself from the court; he held liberal opinions; and he endeavoured, in order to make himself agreeable to the nation and to reconcile himself with the army, to separate himself from the superannuated etiquette of his family, to despise the antiquated lumber of the old regime, and to breathe a new and a fresher air. He surrounded himself with the most popular artists, he frequented the fêtes of the people, he sought for pleasure, and affected to cover a passing attachment for an actress with a veil through which appeared the frivolity of youth. He was anxious to please the French even through their vices.

II

The King had married him in 1816 to the Princess Caroline, daughter of the Prince Royal of Naples, in order to consolidate the house of Bourbon upon the three thrones it occupied in Italy, in Spain, and at Paris, and to give to France heirs of the royal race, who were no longer hoped for from the Duchess de Angoulême. Two daughters, one of whom had died soon after its birth, proved the fecundity of this union. The young couple lived happy in their mutual affection, and France looked forward to the birth of princes, pledges of perpetuity for the monarchy. The duke and duchess forgot the world, and were forgotten by it, in domestic felicity full of tenderness and confidence.

But crime did not forget them.

There was at that time in Paris a man lost amongst the crowd, and but little known to his fellow beings, a common

Louvel: his previous life

workman in one of those subordinate trades which minister to the wants of the public, and who live on wages earned from town to town. His name was Louvel; he was born at Versailles where his family were retailers of old clothes. He lost his parents at an early age; but a sister whom he loved, and who had been as a mother to him, still lived with and watched over him at Versailles. This was the only being with whom Louvel had any tie of tenderness upon the earth. He was at this period thirty-two years old; a little slender man, wasted with internal consumption, of a bilious complexion, pallid and wan, in a constant state of excitement, hard favoured, thin lipped, stiff in manner, with a close and suspicious countenance, an image of fanaticism, revolving in a contracted brain some idea ill understood, and suffering mentally until his deadly hand should have relieved him by a crime from its weight and its martyrdom.

Louvel was born four years before the republic, and had received that sort of Roman education which was then given in common by the convention and the directory to the children of the people, in the midst of popular ceremonies and philosophical fêtes, the spectacles, the speeches, and the hymns of which seduced the youthful hearts from the ancient faith, and inflamed them with enthusiasm for reason, for country, and for freedom. Of this he retained a firm and vivid impression; and from a longing for some system of faith, inherent in his reflective mind, he had subsequently followed the worship of the *Theophilanthropists*, a sort of popular deism reduced to a moral system and to outward form by the director Lareveillère-Lépaux. The origin of his ideas seems to have resulted from these two impressions of his childhood: a fanatical devotion to the revolution, and a blind zeal for his country. Other ideas equally ardent, such as national vanity, enthusiasm for conquest, and for Napoleon,—that god of armies and military glory, the religion of the camp and the barracks,—seem to have added to his first revolutionary impressions other confused and incoherent elements. The reverses of the armies, the fall of his chief, the return of the Bourbons, horror of the counter-revolution, and the humiliation of the country under the feet

of the foreigners, aroused those feelings of anger and despair which fermented into a paroxysm of rage and madness in the solitary soul of this enthusiast.

III.

Louvel wandered from city to city, from Italy to France, from France to the Isle of Elba, during the exile of his hero, constantly revolving in his mind the presentiment of a crime. He did not, however, reveal this to any one, not even to those whom he expected some day or other to serve by accomplishing it. Always laborious, and always taciturn with his fellow workmen, shunning all society, and avoiding all those dissipations which are at once a recreation and a snare to persons of his condition in their hours of leisure, he buried himself in his own thoughts, reading and ruminating on books, journals, and popular songs, in which the public writers of the revolution, the liberal pamphleteers, and the Napoleon poets associated themselves in a heterogeneous league, to exalt at once the republic, the empire, national freedom, and to turn against the Bourbons all the hearts, all the minds, all the hatred, and all the contempt of the public. He was anxious to manifest his rancour; but he did not know whom to strike.

So far back as 1814, when Louis XVIII. and his family were about to land from the vessel which had brought them back to France, Louvel had hurried from Rochelle to Calais, with the intention of killing the King, or the first prince that might fall in his way. Thus a stroke of a dagger awaited, unknown to him, the first step of Louis XVIII. upon the soil of his forefathers; but chance, or hesitation, on the part of Louvel, had saved him. Astonished at the popular enthusiasm which manifested itself at sight of the royal family, Louvel returned to Paris, to relieve his mind, as he said, from the murderous thoughts which oppressed it. The more we consider the criminal, the more we are convinced that the crime was owing to a mental malady. "I sometimes hesitated," said Louvel himself, analysing his own perversity: "I asked myself if I was not wrong; but I could not bear the entrance

He determines to kill the Duke de Berry.

of the foreigners. I wished to travel to relieve my mind. I went to Chambéry; but I left that place when I heard of the arrival of Bonaparte at Grenoble, for I wished to know the truth of it. If the Count d'Artois has been at Lyons I should have killed him. I returned to Paris with the baggage-waggons of the army. After the Emperor's departure I was seized with the same thoughts again. I went to Rochelle and purchased a poniard there. I then returned to Versailles, where I was employed in the court stables: from that moment I did not cease to occupy myself with the means of accomplishing my purpose at Versailles, St Germain, St. Cloud, or Fontainebleau. I went to the hunting parties without saying a word to my sister. To obtain time for this I did my work on the other days, I always carried a poniard about me when I thought I was likely to meet with a Bourbon; but I was determined to commence with the Duke de Berry, because he was the stock of the family. After him I intended to kill the Duke d'Angoulême, then the Count d'Artois, then the King, and after him all the rest of them! Perhaps, however, I might have stopped with the King. The only culprits are those princes in particular who have borne arms against their country. It was not merely to the hunting parties that I followed these princes. For three years I lurked almost every evening about those theatres where I thought the Duke de Berry was likely to be. To ascertain this I read all the play-bills, for I conjectured where he would go by the nature of the performances. When, after watching at the opera, I found he had not arrived at eight o'clock, I went away. I followed him even to the churches, in the hope of getting near enough to strike him, but the crowd and his guards always kept me at a distance."

IV

Such was the life of this man, in whom were embodied in one living hatred, without relaxation, remorse, or pity, all those scattered and contradictory hatreds which the republic, the Empire, pretorian fanaticism, liberty, national resentment, prejudice, animosity, and the perfidy of parties, journals, and

Night of the 13th February.

pamphlets, had spread around like a popular miasma against the Bourbons. This miasma respired by all, was to inflict madness upon one alone—this was Louvel.

V.

In the mean time the Duke and Duchess de Berry, solely occupied with their happiness, and strangers to all political factions, gave themselves up, with all the eagerness of their youth and natural dispositions, to the pleasures and fêtes which the carnival multiplied, during the last days of the theatrical season at Paris. Beloved and popular amongst that world of art, of music and the dance which prolongs the opera nights till day, they delighted in the enjoyment of this popularity. On the 13th February they purposed going to the Royal Theatre, where they had not been for some days before. Being both eager and curious in pursuit of amusements, it might be supposed that they would not allow this festive season to pass without making their appearance there. While they were enjoying the prospect of the evening's pleasure; and were occupied with their toilette and with the costumes for the night, the assassin who watched their door, and almost read their very thoughts, conjectured on his part that the attraction of pleasures was about to deliver his prey into his hands.

VI.

He had already for two evenings before been watching the doors of the Opera-house. On Sunday he rose earlier than usual with all the eager preparation of a man who looks forward to the commission of a crime with as much joy as others feel at the approach of pleasure. He breakfasted deliberately at his accustomed place in the street where he lived, and chatted freely with his usual table companions; he then returned to his chamber, and taking the smallest and the sharpest of his two daggers, the better to hide it under his coat, he went out to look at the masks, and the procession of the *bœuf gras*,

Louvel's preparation for the crime.

the favourite spectacle of idle people during those days of merry-making. Then, avoiding the crowd, he went to wander about till night, on the road to the Bois de Boulogne, thus passing, and repassing twice under the garden walls of the Elysée, the residence of the Duke de Berry. Towards the close of the day he returned to his landlord's, seated himself at table, and took his meal, chatting all the time on indifferent matters with one of the persons employed in the King's stables. After his dinner he went back to his room, and armed himself with a second poniard, that he might have a weapon ready in each hand for all emergencies. Convinced that the prince would not fail to be present on this last day of gaiety, he walked about with an air of indifference under the windows of the theatre which were already lit up, near a small door through which the members of the Royal family entered and came out to avoid the bustle and tumult of the crowd. At eight o'clock the clattering of horses' feet, and the gleaming of torches born by the outriders, announced the coming of the royal carriages. Louvel rushed towards the door, saw the Duke alight first and offer his hand to the Duchess. He might have struck the blow at that moment, but he felt himself restrained by some hidden power; whether it was a failure of courage which he had often, he said, experienced at the moment when his intention was about to be realised by an irrevocable act, or, that the sight of the Duchess, young, smiling, and happy, and pity for these two victims he was about to immolate with the same blow, had involuntarily softened him, he let the opportunity slip, and waited for another.

VII.

Ashamed of himself, however, and indignantly reproaching his own weakness, he retired slowly, almost renouncing his project for that night, and passed through the Palais-Royal to return to his lodging which was close by; but again beset by evil thoughts he suddenly slackened his pace. He reflected that in a few days his duties would recall him to Versailles, where opportunities for murder would not occur again

The Duke and Duchess de Berry at the opera.

until the still distant hunting season. He then placed before himself this terrible and false dilemma: "am I right? or am I wrong? If I am right," he replied, "why does my courage fail me? If I am wrong, why do these ideas leave me no repose?" Determined to conquer his cowardice if he was a coward, and convinced that his ideas were correct because they were obstinate, he suddenly turned round, retraced his steps with ferocious resolution, from the garden of the Palais-Royal to the entrance of the opera-house, ascertained that his victim had not left it during his indecision, then walked backwards and forwards between the garden and the theatre to pass the time, watching at a distance the movements of the carriages which would announce the departure of the prince. At twenty minutes past eleven the royal carriages arrived, and drew up at some distance from the entrance appropriated to the princes. He slipped in after the carriages, entered the small deserted street called the Rue de Louvois, and placing himself at the head of a cab-horse, like a servant waiting for his master, he patiently remained in this attitude till he heard the order issued for drawing up the royal carriages. The shadow of the opera-house wall concealed this unknown countenance from the servants of the Duke de Berry, and his immovable attitude removed all suspicion from the sentinels.

VIII.

Meanwhile the prince and princess, only separated by a wall from the man who was numbering the minutes of their existence, were enjoying in their box, without any presentiment of evil, the pleasures of the performance, and of conversation between the acts. The Duke and Duchess of Orleans were present that evening in a neighbouring box, with their children. The two families, who were very intimate owing to the relationship of the two duchesses, saluted each other with smiles of recognition. During an interval between the performances the Duke and Duchess de Berry paid their cousins a visit in their box. The duke embraced the children, and played with the little Duke de Chartres, who was also

Louvel stabs the Duke de Berry.

doomed to a tragical death in the flower of his age. On passing through the lobby to return to their own box, the duchess was struck in the breast by a box door, which was violently thrown open at the moment she was passing. She was then *enceinte* a few weeks, and fearful that the blow, the fright, and fatigue might endanger the fruit of her womb, she expressed a wish to retire before the end of the opera, and the *bal masqué* which was to follow it. The duke arose to conduct her himself to the carriage, intending to return to his box to enjoy the remaining pleasures of the night.

On the summons of the prince's attendants the royal carriage drove up to the door. The young duchess supported on one side by her husband's hand, and on the other by that of her equerry Count de Mesnard, entered the carriage; the Countess de Béthisy, her lady in waiting, following her. "Adieu!" said her husband smiling to her, "we shall soon meet again." The footmen folded up the steps of the carriage, and the prince turned round to enter the vestibule from the street. At this moment Louvel, who had approached like an inoffensive spectator, or a servant who was waiting for his master, sprung, with all the vigour of his resolution, between the sentinel who was presenting arms, and the footman who was closing the carriage door, and seizing the left shoulder of the Duke de Berry with his left hand, as if to secure his victim under the knife, he struck him with the poniard in the right side, and left the weapon in the wound. The rapidity of the act, the confusion of the bystanders, the uncertain light afforded by the torches, and the staggering of the prince under the blow, prevented the Count de Choiseul and the Count de Mesnard at the moment from discerning the murderous act and gesture of the unknown. He fled unpursued towards the Rue de Richelieu, and having turned the corner of the street, he walked with a careless pace towards the Boulevard.

IX.

The Duke de Berry, struck by an invisible hand, and thrown by the force of the blow against the Count de Mesnard,

Arrest of Louvel.

had only, as it always happens, felt the shock and not the wound. On recovering himself he put his hand on the place where he had been struck, and it there fell upon the hilt of a dagger. A horrible light broke in upon him. "I am assassinated; I am a dead man!" he cried. "I feel the dagger; that man has killed me!" At this exclamation the Duchess de Berry, whose carriage had not yet departed uttered a piercing scream, which rent the heavens and drowned the tumult. "Open the door! open the door!" she cried to the footman, who still had his hand upon it: without waiting for the step to be lowered, she sprang out and threw her arms round her husband, who had just extracted the poniard, which covered her dress with his blood. They seated the fainting prince upon a bench in the outer hall, where the servants wait for their masters. They tore open his dress, and the blood flowing from the wound indicated the spot where the blow had been struck, upon the right breast. "I am killed," he repeated on recovering his senses; "send for a priest; come here, my dear wife, that I may die in your arms!"

During this momentary pause in the vestibule, the sentinel, the footmen, and three gendarmes, horror struck at the deed, ran in pursuit of the assassin. He had already passed the façade of the opera-house, in the Rue-de-Richelieu and had concealed himself in the shadow of an arcade which runs from this street under the broad arches of the Bibliotheque. A waiter of a Café, named Paulnier, there seized him round the body, struggled with him, and assisted by the sentinel and the gendarmes, brought him back to the place where he had committed the murder. He had nearly fallen a victim to the fury of the spectators, who collared and dragged him towards the vestibule; but the officers of the prince, trembling lest they should destroy with the criminal the secret or the plot of the crime, saved him, and had him conducted to the opera guard-house. M. de Clermont-Lodève followed him there to witness his first examination. They found upon him the second dagger and the sheath of the one which he had left in the bosom of the prince. M. de Clermont returned with this weapon, and these evidences of the crime to the vestibule.

X.

The Duke de Berry was no longer there. He had recovered his senses, and had been removed in the arms of his servants to a small saloon behind his box, where he was surrounded by medical men, who were probing his wound. "Alas!" said he, on learning the apprehension and name of the criminal, "what a cruel fate, that I should die by the hand of a Frenchman!" A ray of hope for a moment inspired the princess and the medical men; he did not, however, partake of it, nor wished he to flatter his wife with an illusion which must only redouble her affliction. "No," said he, with a cool, firm, and incredulous tone; "I will not delude myself; the poniard entered up to the very hilt, I can assure you." His sight was now becoming dim from failing strength, occasioned by loss of blood, and he felt about for his wife, stretching his arms in all directions. "Are you there, Caroline," he demanded. "Yes," the princess tenderly replied; "I am here, and I shall never quit you!" The surgeon of his household, the companion of his exile, shocked at the rumour of the crime, had hastened to the side of the dying prince; and the blood having ceased to flow, he sucked the wound. "What are you doing, Bongon?" eagerly demanded the dying prince, "perhaps the poniard was poisoned!"

XI.

His first word had been to ask not for a doctor but a priest. Struck in the very noontide of youth and of pleasure, there had been in his mind no transition between the thoughts of time and the thoughts of eternity. He had passed in one second from the spectacle of a fête to the contemplation of his end, like those men, who by a sudden immersion in cold water are snatched from the burning delirium of intoxication. He had shown in this revival, instantaneous and without weakness of his thoughts, the deliberate courage of a soldier. He now evinced the faith of a Christian, and the uneasy impatience of a man who fears not to die, but to die before he had confessed his faults, and re-

Consternation of the royal family.

ceived the pledge of second life. His education drawn from a family which was not less incorporated with the church than with the throne, was found at the bottom of his soul in proportion as the gushing out of life kept pace with the flowing of his blood. He never ceased to inquire in a low voice if the priest had not arrived.

XII.

At length the priest came. It was the Bishop of Chartres, his confessor, for whom the Count de Clermont Lodève had gone to the Tuileries. The bishop and the dying man conferred a few moments in a low voice, and the agitation of the prince appeared to subside. He resumed all his presence of mind, and gave vent to the tender effusions of his heart to his brother, the Duke d'Angoulême, his sister-in-law, the duchess, and his father the Count d'Artois, who hastened in succession to the scene in all the confusion of a sudden alarm, according to the hour they were informed, and the rapidity of their horses. The Duke de Bourbon, his fellow soldier in the army of his father, the Duke of Orleans, his wife and sister, who were present on the first rumour of the crime, and who had not quitted the theatre, stood around the bed of death which had been prepared in one of the saloons of this festive place. Apprehensive of the tumult, which might cause numerous accidents by accumulating frightened crowds at the doors, it was thought advisable not to apprise the public of the murder, or to interrupt the performance and the dances of the night; so that dying agonies and boundless merriment, songs and sobbing, the tinkling of music and the lamentations of grief, the priest and the mask, God and the orgie, were only separated by some wooden partitions, the echoes of both rising, unknown to each other, in the tumultuous edifice, and increasing by the frightful contrast the grief and horror of this bed of death!

XIII.

The Duke d'Angoulême and the Duke de Berry loved each other, not only as two brothers, but like two orphans and two

The Duke de Berry's interview with his relatives.

exiles, inseparable companions in the same fortunes. They embraced each other with a warmth of affection that was broken by sobs, body to body, tears and blood mingling together on the hands and clothes of both.

When he beheld at his bed-side all those faces, and all those affections of family and friendship, the Duke de Berry desired to see, and to bless his young daughter by the duchess, born the year before. She was brought to him asleep. He stretched out his arms to her, and blessing her with his trembling hand; "Poor child," he said, "may you be less unhappy than the rest of your family!"

The most eminent doctors and surgeons in their respective departments had been summoned in succession from the various and distant quarters in which they resided. They consulted in a low voice, in one corner of the apartment. Dupuytren, their chief, resolved to try one final means of salvation, by opening and enlarging the wound to occasion the blood, which was effusing internally, to flow outwards, and thus to relieve the respiration. The Duchess de Berry during this useless operation, pressed her lips upon the cold hand of her husband, which still retained its grasp of hers. "Spare me this suffering," he said, "since I must die!" He then put his fingers on his wife's head, as if to exhibit one last act of tenderness by caressing her beautiful hair. "Caroline," he said to her, "take care of yourself, for the sake of the child you bear." This was the first revelation of the birth of a son who escaped the crime, but not the misfortune of his race. He recommended his servants with tears to his father; and he expressed a wish to see his assassin, to demand of him the cause of his hatred, reproach him for his injustice, and pardon him for his death. "Who is this man?" he murmured, "what have I done to him? It is perhaps some person that I have unknowingly offended." The Count d'Artois assured him that the assassin had no personal animosity against him. "It must be some maniac then," said the Duke. "Ah! that I would live until the King arrives, that he may grant me the pardon of this man! Promise me, father, promise me brother, promise me all of you to ask the King to spare this man's life!"

His last moments.

They all promised him this, to calm the ardour of generosity and pardon which preyed upon his mind. His natural goodness displayed itself at the price of his own blood.

After some private signs and hints that passed between him and the duchess, two young girls were brought to his bed-side; these were his daughters, born in London, of his clandestine marriage with the faithful companion of his exile, and whom he brought up with paternal care in Paris. The two poor children, awoke out of their sleep to embrace in the midst of a court, in tears, him whom they had formerly regarded as their father alone, were brought in trembling, and knelt down, their faces buried in the bed-clothes that were stained with the prince's blood. He spoke to them softly in English, and desired them to remember him, and to love their mother. He raised them up, kissed them, and wept over them; then presenting them to the duchess: "I know you well enough, Caroline," he said to her in a tone of confidence "to beg of you to take care of these orphans when I am dead." The children threw themselves into the open arms of their second mother, and the duchess with that instinct which is the genius of the heart, resolved to adopt them in the presence of her husband, as it were, by a single gesture, and a single word. She beckoned the Duchess of Gontaut, who held her own child in her arms, to the bedside, and taking the daughters of the foreign lady by the hand, she said to them: "Embrace your sister!"

XIV.

He confessed, in the middle of the night, to the Bishop of Chartres, and seemed consoled by the prayers and the benedictions of religion. He asked pardon aloud for the weaknesses of his soul and the errors of his life. "My God!" he repeatedly exclaimed, "pardon me, and pardon him also, as myself, who has deprived me of life!"

The Duke d'Angoulême, a prince, pious from his youth upwards, and who had with his brother the sacred authority of a life always exemplary, was praying on his knees at the foot

Arrival of the King.

of the bed. "Brother," said the wounded man timidly to him, "do you think that God will pardon me?" "Oh, my dear brother," replied the Duke d'Angoulême, with celestial confidence in look, voice, and gesture; "What farther pledge of mercy do you require. He has made you a martyr!"

The night advanced and life was ebbing, but his soul was free from the lethargy of death, and attentive to all its attachments. The venerable Count de Nantouillet, his first guide in the camp, and his faithful companion in exile, hastened to receive the last farewell of his pupil. "Come my old friend," said the duke to him, as he extended his arms, "let me embrace you once more." He was informed that the marshals had arrived to evince their interest and sorrow at the event. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I once hoped to shed my blood more usefully amongst them, for France!"

XV.

The King who had been kept all night at the Tuileries by the prudence of his ministers, who doubtless apprehended the effect of the dismal sight upon him, or some ambush for the commission of a second crime outside the palace, at length arrived at daybreak. The clattering of the horses of the escort on the pavement of the street made the dying prince start with joy. "Uncle," he exclaimed as soon as he saw the King, "give me your hand that I may kiss it for the last time!" Louis XVIII. held out his hand and grasped that of his nephew. "Uncle," resumed the prince anxiously. "I beg of you, as my dying prayer, to spare the life of my assassin!" "My dear nephew," replied the King, "you are not in such danger as you imagine, we will speak of it another time!" "Ah! you do not consent," replied the duke, with an accent of doubt and sorrow. "Oh! say yes, say yes, that I may die in peace. Pardon, pardon for the man!" As the King, however, was silent or endeavoured to divert his nephew's thoughts to other subjects: "Ah! the pardon of this man," murmured the duke, with an expression of bitterness upon his lips, "would at least have consoled me in my last moments! If," he persisted, "I

Death of the Duke de Berry.

could only have the gratification of knowing that this man's blood would not be shed for me after my death !"

A few moments after he expired, still articulating in his delirium the ungratified wish of his heart. He died in the act of pardoning ; a great soul obscured in life, shining forth in death ; a hero of clemency, having at the first effort accomplished the most difficult and the most meritorious act of humanity—that of dying well !

The deep sobs which had hitherto been repressed, gushed forth at his last sigh. His wife, in a state of delirium, cut off her hair, as a last token of affection and laid it upon his body, then wildly cursing the country in which her husband had been murdered, she demanded of the king in angry accents, permission to retire for ever to Sicily. The King knelt down beside the bed, and closed with his own hand, the lips and eyelids of the last living hope of his race.

XVI.

The noise of his death spread through all Paris at day-break, and thence throughout all France, exciting everywhere not only the emotion of public horror, but the consternation of a presage. Blows which are struck by crime, and above all by political crime, are a thousand times more startling than those which result from natural causes, for fright is mingled with pity. The murder committed by Louvel broke forth as a collective crime, revealing some immense and implacable conspiracy, smouldering under the feet of all, threatening every heart, and thirsting, drop by drop, for the last blood of the Bourbons. The imagination of the people, shaken by the commotion of the night, indulged in the most odious suspicions, and fresh crimes were supposed to hurtle in the air. The assassin was invested with the name of a party. The royalists in the first paroxysm of their dismay, talked of nothing but snares, ambushes, plots, and treason around the royal family. They accosted each other with the question, if this ill-omened event would not at length open the eyes of the King to the abyss which the ministers had dug under his dynasty ; and if,

Consternation of the public.

amidst the tears shed upon the dead body of this prince, their last hope, they should accuse, or be grateful to Providence, which by the blood of one dear victim, might perhaps yet save the monarchy? The liberals, still more depressed and dismayed, because the crime would be imputed in all its horror to them, protested with sincerity their execration of a murderer who had cast a foul stain on their cause, and thrown suspicion upon freedom itself. They felt that public opinion, in its present excitement, would abandon them from horror of the crime of a villain, who would be looked upon as their accomplice; that they must undergo a long and cruel expiation for a murder of which they were innocent, and that the minister upon whom they calculated for moderating their enemies, and for stretching forth a hand to them from amidst the government, would be torn from the King by the supplications of his family, and inevitably sacrificed to the fury of the times.

Obscure murmurs were already beginning to rise against the inefficiency of the police, which could not answer for the life of a prince, the hope of the throne, against the hand of an isolated individual, watching for three whole hours for his victim in the open street. Already suppositions even still more revolting and more perverse, insinuated that the favourite minister had allowed the party of his enemies to be struck, in the sole pledge of hereditary succession, that the crown might slip away to the head of a collateral. Nothing was dreamt of anywhere but accomplices, even amongst those who were the first to be injured by the crime, in their favour, their power, or their ambition. Those who did not believe in these calumnies, affected to do so, in order to criminate the system through the individual. The name of M. Decazes was in the mouths of all the crafty or frightened royalists. The favourite was the sacrifice demanded by them in expiation of the victim.

An accidental circumstance which attested in M. Decazes disquietude of mind, heartfelt zeal, and disdain of all suspicions, at a moment when his duty required him to forget himself, had given some apparent consistency to this odious shadow of complicity, cast by credulity or perfidy upon his innocence.

Accusation against M. Decazes.

A few moments after the apprehension of Louvel, and while the Duke de Berry was still in existence, M. Decazes, M. Anglès, prefect of police, the attorney-general, M. Pasquier, and M. Simeon, the last two being also ministers, had hastened to the opera on the rumour of the crime. They entered the lower hall where the murderer was in custody in order to undergo a first examination. The surgeons had not yet declared the wound to be mortal, and they were fluctuating between hopes and fears. A sudden thought struck M. Decazes at sight of the criminal; he imagined that by a refinement of villany, the dagger with which the assassin had struck the prince might have been poisoned; that a knowledge of this fact and of the nature of the poison might save the victim, and that the murderer, in the hope of saving himself, would perhaps consent to reveal this in confidence to those who had the disposal of his life. Impelled by this hope, M. Decazes hurried towards the assassin, and whispering in his ear. "Wretch," said he, in a low voice, "perhaps you can still make a confession to save the life of your victim, and to extenuate your crime in the eyes of God. Tell me, sincerely, tell me alone, is the dagger poisoned?" "It is not," replied the assassin coldly, but with apparent truth. M. Decazes breathed more freely, and thought for a moment the prince was safe. He hastened to apprise the surgeons of this, and interrogated Louvel aloud. They then learned his name, his trade as a journeyman in the employment of the king's saddler, his residence at the *Petites-Ecuries*, his motive of political hatred against the royal family, and the isolated nature of his crime, without any other complicity than the fanaticism of ideas imbibed by him from the public discontents.

But this eagerness of M. Decazes, and the few words he had whispered in the ear of the assassin, to draw his secret from him before his official examination, misinterpreted by the perfidy and the malignity of some assistants into recommendations of silence from the minister to an accomplice, were circulating already from mouth to mouth, in the private conferences of the courtiers raging for the ruin of the favorite, and served as a text and an indication to the most infamous calumnies.

XVII

The King struck by this calamity in his nephew, in the heart of his house, in the succession of his family, in his political system, and his affection for his minister, had returned to the Tuileries bathed in tears, and dismayed by presentiments of evil. M. Decazes had followed his master thither to concert such measures with him—for the mourning, for public safety, and how to meet the Chambers—as were called for under present circumstances. With great self-denial he offered his resignation to the King, feeling that the despair of the royalists, the grief of the Count d'Artois, the consternation of the royal family, palace rivalships, parliamentary questioning, and the public rage and sorrow, would accumulate against him, over the body of the Duke de Berry, a mass of accusations and suspicions which would sweep away his favour and his fortune.

"Alas!" said the King to his friend, "I must not delude myself; the ultra-royalist party, which besets and hates me as much as yourself, will make an instrument of my grief, and accuse me of insensibility and blindness, if I support you against it. But no matter, policy and friendship forbid me to give up France to those who would ruin it in a very short time. I do not owe the sacrifice of my country to my personal grief: I shall resist, and we shall not separate!"

M. Decazes then prepared the measure which a few hours after he was to present to the Chambers: the suspension of individual liberty and of the freedom of the press, two laws of public peril and temporary dictatorship, and the formation of the Chamber of Peers into a state tribunal, for the trial of the criminal and his accomplices.

XVIII.

The royalists, excited by their grief and their hatred, prepared, on their side, to overturn in the public commotion the obstacle opposed to their domination by the minister, to summon the King, in the name of his nephew's dead body by his

Scene in the Chamber of Deputies.

brother's tears, and to strike the heart of the monarch through that of his favourite. Never, perhaps, did political enmity observe less decency in the regret for so sudden and so calamitous a tragedy, or make more haste to turn to the profit of its party the blood which was, as it were, still flowing. The Chamber of Deputies convoked at day-break, concentrated in a threatening silence its sorrow, its mourning, its ferocious joy, and the crime of parties impatient to cast upon each other a still greater crime. Immense crowds of people besieged the doors and avenues, in that silent but feverish immobility which characterises the vague emotion of a multitude torn by two conflicting sentiments: the horror of a crime execrated by all, and disquietude on its own destiny.

After a long delay which was filled up with conversations in an under tone, and by the circulation of intelligence from without, the president and secretaries entered the hall of assembly indicating in dress and features their grief for the event of the night. They had scarcely taken their seats when a deputy of the extreme right, M. Clausel de Coussergues demanded to be heard.

This was one of those men such as are always to be found in excited assemblies; who are credulous from hatred, and cruel from thoughtlessness, who condense within themselves, like hollow clouds, the electricity of the atmosphere, and who, through excessive zeal, are eager to give a responsible voice to the vague and anonymous rumours of party spirit. Some ultra-members of the right maliciously rejoiced on seeing him appear in the tribune; the centre regretted it, the ministers lamented, while the left and the liberal party were irritated before hand, certain of having to put up with an insult, or to refute a calumny. "Gentlemen!" he exclaimed, with the expression of an orator who pours out the full inspiration of his soul; "there is no law extant to regulate the impeachment of ministers, but the nature of such a proceeding demands that it should be made in a public sitting and in the face of France. I propose to the Chamber, therefore, an act of accusation against M. Decazes, minister of the interior, as an accomplice of this assassination!"

Indignation of the Chamber at M. Clausel de Cousseorgues' motion.

At these words the voice of M. Clausel de Cousseorgues was drowned in the indignant exclamations of the centre and the left. The excess and wickedness of the act disgusted even the least moderate. He quitted the tribune after having obstinately demanded to carry out his accusation. M. de Villèle reproached him in a low voice, and he returned into the ranks of his friends. M. de Labourdonnaie, with more discretion, contented himself with demanding that the Chamber should address the King, and offer him its energetic co-operation in all measures tending to repress those perverse doctrines which sap the foundations of all thrones alike. General Foy, in the name of the liberal party, agreed to an address of condolence, which should be entirely devoted to the expression of their sorrow, and should not allow party dissensions to interrupt the unanimity of the public grief. "If such an event," he said with propriety and truth, "be deplorable for all, it is especially so for the friends of liberty, for they cannot doubt that their adversaries will avail themselves of this execrable crime to try and rob the country of those liberties which the King has conferred upon it, and is desirous of maintaining!" This integrity of moderation of General Foy won him golden opinions. A committee was nominated to draw up the address, and the Chamber separated in silent expectation. The people dispersed in melancholy and good order.

On the following day M. Clausel de Cousseorgues renewed his motion in a modified form. He suppressed the phrase "complicity in the murder" which inculcated the individual, and substituted for it the word treason which inculcated the system. M. Courvoisier moved that the authentic report of the previous day's sitting should specify the indignation of the assembly on hearing the proposition of M. Clausel de Cousseorgues; M. Benoit, an old administrator under the empire, who had joined the royalists with ardour since the return of the Bourbons, opposed the motion of M. Courvoisier, and defended the right of deputies to impute faults to a minister. But M. Clausel de Cousseorgues had imputed a crime to M. Decazes. M. de Saint-Aulaire, father-in-law of the insulted minister, rushed to the tribune to avenge his relative, but his

position was more eloquent than his speech. The loftiness and energy of his attitude raised him beyond truth and nature. "Since M. Clausel de Coussergues," he said, "persists in reproducing his proposition, since he perseveres in this accusation—a monument of his madness, I feel myself compelled to speak, but I shall only reply by a single word, and shall content myself with saying to him: You are a calumniator!"

The accusation characterised by this single word fell under the reprobation of all serious men. M. Decazes, crushed under the weight of responsibility, under the exclamations of resentment which arose against him from the tomb of the prince, under his personal sorrow, and under the tears of the King, had the firmness, however, to appear before his enemies, to shield his master, and to brave with disdain the insults of hatred. But the effort he made was evinced in the paleness and melancholy of his features, and the dejection of his voice. Few men have ever had in their public lives a more terrible and more complicated situation to contend against. He was in appearance the minister, but in reality he was already the victim ascending the *rostrum* to gratify more effectually the looks and the ferocious joy of his triumphant enemies. He confined himself to reading the electoral law bill which displaced the parliamentary influence in the country, and restored, as *spolia optima* deposited upon the tomb, the power and the ascendancy to the ultra-royalists. The latter accepted the offering, but in their hopes they had already demolished the hands that presented it. Two harsh laws, suspensive of personal freedom and the liberty of the press, were offered by the minister, in expiation of the blood that was shed by a fanatic, and as a ransom for the ministry. Advances thrown away! The palace, the court, the Chamber of Peers, the Chamber of Deputies, the saloons, the streets, the public journals, resounded with the most fiery invectives against the moral accomplice of the assassination. "His feet have slipped in the blood," wrote M. de Chateaubriand in the *Conservateur*, thus making of death an image to serve hatred, and of this image a calumny against a political adversary, broken-hearted and beat down in his misfortunes. In this great writer was recognised the man

Royalist wrath against M. Decazes.

in whom political passions had stifled the magnanimity of genius. Every weapon was acceptable to him and to his friends, provided it struck their victim. These insinuations and invectives increased hourly against M. Decazes. It cannot be disputed that if he had been more devoted at that time to his ambition than to his master, M. Decazes would have found an asylum against this persecution, as Necker did in 1789, in the revolutionary and Bonapartist party hostile to the Bourbons. This party half overthrown by the effects of Louvel's poniard, offered the young minister alliance, support, popularity, and deference, which would have made him a dangerous chief of faction if he had consented to accept them. The King's heart was in his hand: it was still in his power at this moment to make this prince break every compact of weakness with his family, and to lead him by a second 5th of September to such a distance from his brother that all return to the royalists would have been impossible. To remove the Count d'Artois from his little agitating court at Paris, to unmask the intrigues constantly hatching by his partisans, to declare him incapable of reigning, by obstinately wishing to reign in anticipation, and through a faction, instead of the will of the nation; to declare the crown to devolve on the Duke d'Angoulême, or, on his refusal, on the Duke of Orleans, after the King; to change the electoral law, and to summon the masses to the committees; these were the measures which the friends of the Count d'Artois, the calumniators of the press, and the underhand conspirators of the anti-chambers of the King's brother, incessantly accused M. Decazes of counselling and premeditating. An obscure intrigue, partially disclosed some months before, and which had been called the "conspiracy of the terrace on the river side," had half revealed intentions in its authors of dethroning Louis XVIII. in favour of his brother, which might give cause for retaliation in an opposite sense. Such retaliation would have been carried higher and farther than the criminals, for the Count d'Artois, an honourable and religious prince, formed no sinister plots against his brother: he was only guilty in the intriguing, mercenary, and ambitious circle with which he allowed himself to be surrounded. But this

Palace intrigues.

circle composed of some bishops of the exclusive church, implacable against liberty of conscience, of great lords of the old court, irreconcilable with revolutionary equality, and of some bold and agitating men, who kept those old passions in a state of fermentation to establish their own importance on secret services, was so odious to the country that the blow which might fall upon it from the hand of the King, or his minister would appear excusable either from danger or hatred. To be just towards the fallen favourite himself, we must acknowledge that it indicates self-denial and greatness of soul in him not to have stayed himself in his fall by such culpable expedients of government, and not to have pulled down the King and the monarchy with him in the ruin of his fortunes.

XIX.

M. de Vitrolles, who was the first person admitted into the privacy of the Count d'Artois, after the first moments left by grief and propriety to the sincere tears of the prince, hinted to him that it would be equally suitable to his despair and dignity to quit the palace of the Tuileries immediately, in order to proclaim a more irreconcilable schism with the favourite, and to retire with his court to the palace of the Elysée. He farther represented to the prince that the uncertainty of the sex of the child which the widow of the Duke de Berry then bore in her womb, leaving the crown without any certain heir after himself and the Duke d'Angoulême, it would be his policy to do violence to his grief, and to marry again. It is even said that he proposed to him to marry the widow of the King of Etruria, daughter of Charles IV., King of Spain, whose son he might adopt, a Bourbon of the Spanish branch, and to whom he could devolve the crown in removing, by a *coup d'état*, the odious and suspected branch of Orleans.

The silence of the prince was his only answer to the unreasonable insinuations of M. de Vitrolles, supported on the following day in the papers, by the pathetic appeals of M. de Chateaubriand and the other writers of his party. From all

The Countess du Cayla.

sides they excited the indignation of the King's brother, of the Duchess d'Angoulême, and of her husband, against the tardiness of the King in purging his councils and his court of the obnoxious man. They resolved, at the instigation of M. de Vitrolles, to make a decisive application to the King. For this they had the authority of their blood, and the authority of their grief. They had farther, in the heart of Louis XVIII., a secret understanding which began to take root, and of which M. Decazes himself was ignorant.

The mysteries of politics are often in the deep shades of palaces, and in the most secret feelings of the hearts of kings. The hand of an invisible female sometimes, unknown to the world, moves those springs which occasion the ruin or the salvation of empires. We are about, for the first time, to unveil that hand, which at this period was still concealed, and which afterwards, so long and so openly managed the mind of the King.

XX.

There was a lady at that time in Paris, young, handsome, and naturally eloquent, equally formed to seduce the heart and the eyes of a prince who loved women without profaning them, and who, at all times, had sought in their society the pleasures of attention and friendship, rather than the voluptuousness of love. The age and infirmities of Louis XVIII. had still farther purified in him the inclinations of nature. He wished for relaxation and confidence, not for the gratification of passion; he might have a friend, but not a favourite. His predilection never exposed the object of his preference to scandal or suspicion.

This lady was called the Countess du Cayla. She was the daughter of M. Talon, an ancient magisterial name. His father, a man of high intrigue during the struggles between the court and the revolution from 1789 to 1792, had been connected with Mirabeau, with the Count de Lamarck, and even with the chiefs of the demagogues. He had played between the parties, to the advancement of his ambition and his fortune, one of those double-faced and ambiguous parts

Her origin and causes of her favour.

which render those who accept them necessary though not estimable. He aspired to the ministry through every channel, serving or defeating the chiefs of the most opposite parties, in proportion as they made him hope or despair of attaining the object of his ambition. He had also been mixed up with the intrigue of the Count de Provence, now Louis XVIII., in 1791. At the moment when the unfortunate Favras was judicially executed for the crime of high treason and seduction for the benefit of the Count de Provence, without revealing anything of his connection, real or supposed, with the brother of Louis XVI., M. Talon had received, it is said, the compromising confidence of the dying man, and a deposit of papers crimimatory against the Count de Provence. These documents, preserved by M. Talon, constituted a menace or a hope, always suspended over the honour of the King. As an emigrant continuing to intrigue in London, M. Talon returned to France under the Empire, was afterwards banished from Paris as an agitating and dangerous man under every system of government, and died in exile before the Restoration. He had left to his daughter the precious deposit of the papers of Favras, the pledge of future gratitude and favour in the event of a return of the monarchy. Such was the public rumour, which has never been confirmed or denied, but to which subsequent events have imparted some credit in the opinion of the court. Such an origin and such a lineage were calculated to give this young lady, in spite of her youth and her candour, some traditions of the paternal genius, of the management of parties, and of the seductions of the court.

XXI

She had been brought up at a school of feminine diplomacy, in the Imperial seminary of Ecouen, conducted by Madame Campan, a lady well trained in court artifices. She had there formed a friendship of childhood with the daughter of the Empress Josephine, then Hortense Beauharnais, since become Queen of Holland, and subsequently Duchess of Saint-Leu. Though belonging to another caste, she had, during the Em-

Viscount de la Rochefoucauld.

pire, and even during the hundred days, cultivated this friendship, always agreeable, and eventually useful, with the cherished daughter-in-law of Napoleon. She had married a gentleman of high birth, attached to the court of the Prince of Condé, but domestic unhappiness, not aggravated by any criminality, had separated her from her husband. Being thus virtually a widow, in the flower of her youth and beauty, burthened alone and without fortune with the care and future prospects of her children, still in the cradle, she lived retired and free from reproach in the house of the Prince of Condé, and in familiar intercourse with the Countess de Rully, her friend, the natural daughter of the prince. Her wit, her grace, her seductive manners, were only known to a limited but pious and elegant circle. She possessed the modesty, the reserve, and, as it were, the presentiment of the destiny of Madame de Main tenon, not laying herself out for admiration, but allowing herself to be sought for in the shade by that of Louis XVIII. Such was the woman whom chance, or the premeditation of the two parties of royalists and the church, was about to introduce into the cabinet of an old man, to promote their designs

XXII.

At the same period a young man of illustrious birth, of a chivalrous figure, of external levity, but profound ambition, although noble, independent, and disinterested, was attracting the notice of the court and the capital by the elegance of his manners and the flutter of his life. He was of the great and princely house of La Rochefoucauld, made illustrious in war, in literature, and even in the factions of the Fronde by the great La Rochefoucauld; a house which, from the time of Louis XIV., seemed to be a portion of royalty itself. This family was divided into several branches, some of which had served the revolution, others the Empire, while that of La Rochefoucauld de Doudeauville had maintained for the old faith and the old dynasty a fidelity proof against the interregnums and the exiles of legitimate royalty. The Viscount de la Rochefoucauld belonged to this unbending branch of the family, and was the only son

His favour with the King and princes.

of the Duke de Doudeauville, to whom the vicissitudes of the revolution had left a princely fortune, great influence, and personal consideration, merited by much beneficence and rigid virtue. The Viscount de la Rochefoucauld, in all the ardour of youth, of bravery, and of public spirit, at the moment of Napoleon's fall, in 1814, had signalled himself, at the head of the young nobility of Paris, eager to seize the opportunity to raise up the throne of his fathers, and to precipitate the downfall of Napoleon. On horseback, with the white colours fluttering on his arm, he was seen riding through the capital, exciting its wavering inhabitants with the acclamations of a new reign, on the day the allies entered Paris. He was erroneously accused of wishing to mutilate the monuments of French victory, by attaching a rope to the statue of Napoleon, and harnessing himself to it with the mob to drag it in the mud. His presence on the place Vendôme at the moment of this impudent profanation, instigated, in fact, by a man reprobated by all parties, had given some credit to this error. Ardent in royalism, but upright in heart, and guiltless of insulting the vanquished, this young man was designated by his name, by his political opinions, and by his zeal, to the favour of the King and the princes. He occupied in their service one of those high functions of honour reserved for the ancient names of the monarchy. The Count d'Artois loaded him with familiar favours, and the King himself showed him much consideration. He was married to a daughter of the Duke Mathieu de Montmorency, one of the most amiable characters that history can have to describe in the vicissitudes of the revolutionary times; a popular reformer from generosity of mind at the commencement, a victim during their excesses, constant after reverses, generous after triumphs, and always moderate and indulgent.

XXIII.

The Viscount de la Rochefoucauld by his family, by his alliance, and by his education—which was confided to the Abbé Duval, an ecclesiastic, eloquent, and influential amongst

The Jesuits.

the priesthood—by his connections in society, and his intimacies at court, lived in an atmosphere of royalism and religion, of the church and the palace, of bishops, princes, and courtiers, which was overshadowed by the favour, impatiently submitted to, of M. Decazes. Though a stranger to that hidden and mischievous government which endeavoured to constitute itself round the Count d'Artois into an ambitious opposition, consisting of some ecclesiastics, emigrants, and intriguers, he shared in the animadversions and terrors which the concessions of M. Decazes and of the King to the ideas, and especially to the men of the revolution, instilled into the royalists of the Chamber, of the aristocracy, and of the clergy. Some Jesuits, those religious diplomatists of the church with the people, scarcely perceptible at that time in the conflict of opinions, began, however to exercise a certain influence over the policy of the ancient families. Permitted, under the Empire, to participate with the university in the education of the higher classes, the Jesuits had displayed in the art of appropriating, attaching, and affiliating youth, a talent, a zeal, and virtues which had elevated their name and influence amongst the aristocracy. They prompted, unknown to them, those houses whose sons they had instructed. Attached to the Bourbons after the fall of the Empire, they were disposed, even by the spirit of their institution, to connect this new reign of the Bourbons with the church, in order to increase the religious faith of the people by the ascendancy of the royal power, and to smooth the road to power to none but religious people. They would naturally incline those opinions which were subjected to them through the medium of conscience, rather towards the clerical policy of the Count d'Artois, than the profane and philosophical policy of the King. The reign of a sovereign royalty agreed better with their nature than that of a deliberative constitution, because it is easier to enthrall a court than a people, and to govern a king than public opinion. This was the first germ of what was called some years after the *congregation*, an associated power partly sacred, partly profane, partly religious, partly ambitious, which, in reality, exercised at a later period so formidable and so fatal an influence on the destiny of the Bour-

Their policy.

bons. This congregation without a body, invisible to the eye, scarcely known to itself in these first years of the reign, already exercised a moral government over the public opinions of a certain number of the greatly devout and the grandly ambitious in the upper classes of Paris and the provinces. Like the air, they gave an inclination to things without appearing to touch them. Many of those who sought that influence bent before it; some, through sincere conversion of the mind which led them, from a disgust of the present, to seek repose from their doubts in the traditional and consolatory worship of the past; others, through servile and interested adulation of opinions, which promised favour and fortune to their votaries.

All the men and women who professed these opinions aspired to the overthrow of the favourite. As a new man, M. Decazes threw high birth into the shade; as a constitutional minister, he disquieted the consciences of the absolutists; as an adviser of the 5th of September, and the revolutionary promotions which had changed the majority in the Chamber of Peers, he alarmed even the impartial royalists as to the fate of the monarchy.

This was some months before the assassination of the Duke de Berry, when the death of this prince had not yet given a motive and a pretext for the general clamour which was to tear him from the heart of the king. It was necessary to insinuate themselves into that heart to uproot from it the power of the minister, and to replace it with another ascendant. An instrument was wanting for this vague design; this instrument could only be a woman, and nature had created her in Madame du Cayla. She was sought for; and friendship discovered her to M. de la Rochefoucauld.

XXIV.

He had been connected for some years past by a platonic attachment, pure as esteem, and ardent as adoration, with this lady, the friend of his wife; and whose beauty, misfortunes, and irresistible attractions he had thus learned to appreciate in the intimacy of his own family. A daily correspondence fostered between them a community of sentiments and ideas which

Attempts of the royalists to gain the throne

was characterised in their letters by the tender titles of brother and sister. The letters of Madame du Cayla, at once pious and tender, like female confidences, evinced, however, by luminous ideas on the affairs of the times, a power of reflection and a clearness of judgment which would not have astonished, either in a Sévigné or a princess, des Ursins. These letters, numbers of which have since been published, doubtless gave to M. de la Rochefoucauld, or to his circle, the first idea of the plan of seduction which it was desirable to attempt on the eyes, the mind, and the heart of the King. "An Esther," as Madame du Cayla herself playfully said, in allusion to the part they wished her to perform, "was necessary for this Ahasuerus."

However this might be, whether the thought of the combination originated solely with the young friend of this seductive woman, or arose in her own mind unknown to herself, in concert with the views and opinions which were fluctuating around her, the Viscount de la Rochefoucauld resolved to make an Esther of the woman he most admired in the world, and to possess himself, through her means, of the heart of Louis XVIII., for the advantage of his political opinions, of the monarchy, and of religion. Having conceived this plan, it was necessary to obtain the consent and concurrence of her who was to be its instrument or its victim; for the part of favourite, even if not criminal, had at least its dangers in the court, and its evil interpretation in public opinion.

XXV.

In virtue of the familiarity established between them, the Viscount de la Rochefoucauld met Madame du Cayla one evening the preceding autumn, in the saloon of the old Prince of Condé, in the Palais Bourbon, and leading her into one of the retired alleys of the gardens of this palace, which then bordered on the Seine, he assumed the mysterious air of one about to confide a secret, and begged her serious attention to the overture he was going to make to her. The lady listened without interrupting him. "Religion and the monarchy,

Interview of Viscount de la Rochefoucauld with Madame du Cayla.

which you love with all the attachment of your family," he said, "are tottering, and ready to crumble in a new revolution. The prime minister, whether through blindness, love of popularity, or ambition, is pushing royalty to fatal concessions, which will place it disarmed at the mercy of its enemies. The royalists are proclaimed public enemies under a king whom they defend in spite of himself. While the improvidence or presumption of a man too dear to the heart of the monarch agitates external parties, his overbearing fortune sows disunion, suspicion, distrust, and even conspiracy, within the palace. The royal family, in a divided state, weakens itself by these divisions before the common enemy. We are drawing towards a precipice; no hand can tear from the King the bandage that blinds him but the hand of a woman, gentle enough not to give umbrage to his self-love while she unseals his eyes. This prince must love those whom he suffers to advise him; his heart constitutes one half of his policy. Madame de Balbi, M. Davaray, M. de Blacas formerly, and M. Decazes at present, are the still living proofs of this disposition of his nature. It is necessary to please in order to acquire a right to direct him. Women, illustrious through their influence, useful or fatal, over the hearts and minds of kings, have by turns ruined or saved royalty, both in France and in Spain; and it is even now from a woman alone that we can look for the salvation of religion and the monarchy. Nature, birth, education, misfortune itself, seem to have designated you for this part. Will you be the saviour of the princes, the friend of the King, the Esther of the royalists, the Maintenon, firm and irreproachable, of a court which is on the way to ruin, and which a woman alone can reconcile and save? Solicit an audience of the King, under pretence of imploring his protection, which you are in want of for yourself and your children; exhibit to him, as if in a casual way, those treasures of gracefulness, wit, and good sense which nature has lavished on you, not for the gloom of retirement in which you bury them, but for the full blaze of familiar intercourse with a king, an enthusiastic admirer of the gifts of mind: charm him in a first interview; quit him so that he may feel

Madame du Cayla repeats the overtures made to her.

a regret at losing you; and a desire to see you again; return when he recalls you; create, as if for the necessity of your affairs, occasions for fresh interviews; listen to his confidential communications; let some timid counsels escape you; insinuate yourself by affection into his heart, and by good sense into his mind; make yourself essential to the relaxation of this suffering soul, overwhelmed with the cares of government; and when your imperceptible empire shall be confirmed by habit in his attachment, make use of this influence, by little and little, to uproot from his confidence the favourite by whom he is fascinated, to reconcile the King with his brother, and with the princes, and to make them concur in adopting, in the person of M. de Villèle and his friends, a ministry at once royalist and constitutional, which shall replace the equilibrium of the throne on the monarchical basis, and prevent the impending catastrophe with which France is threatened."

XXVI.

Such were the words of the young negotiator of the party which was already forming in the Chamber, between the ultra-royalists and the daring royalists of the Count d'Artois' antichamber, against the liberals of the party of M. Decazes. But this attempt on the self-love and ambition of a woman, then timid and modest, and almost offended at so strange a proposition, was foiled at once by her modesty and the delicate nature of the enterprise. "What!" she exclaimed to her friend, with an accent of astonishment and reproach, "are you then so little acquainted with me as to try to dazzle me with a prospect of empire and domination at the court? Have I ever given you a right to confound me,—humble and retired as I am in my gloom and my misfortune, hating as I do the manœuvres, the intrigues, and the glare of courts,—with those bold, ambitious, or hypocritical women, who avail themselves of their vices, or even of their virtues, to seduce or govern the hearts of kings? Believe me that such a part is equally opposed to my nature and to my position; and if you wish that we should continue friends, never again speak to me on the

Position of Madame du Cayla.

subject. I shall even forget that you have so little understood me as to have spoken of it at all."

There was so fixed an intention, and such irrevocable determination of mind in the accent with which these words were pronounced, that the negotiator did not press the matter any farther, but thought of seeking some other method of accomplishing the successful combination of his party.

XXVII

The dangers and misfortunes of Madame du Cayla, resulting from her rupture with her husband, who contested her fortune with her, and insisted on having his children, were so imminent, that her friends, and necessity itself, counselled her to throw herself on the protection of the King. The Viscount de La Rochefoucauld, who seemed to have forgotten his chimerical projects which had been rejected with such energetic repugnance, resumed with his friend his feeling of interest, the most true and the most natural, for her unhappy situation. He encouraged her to solicit an audience of the King, and to throw herself at his feet, to demand an asylum in his justice; quite certain that the tears, the eloquence, and the understanding of the suppliant would operate, in spite of herself, on the eyes and mind of the monarch, and that in granting her the favour she asked, he would feel her attractions. Whether reflection had modified the first repugnance with which the idea suddenly presented to her imagination had inspired the lady, and that the fancy recurring to her mind had assumed a less repulsive form; or, whether the horror of being bereft of her children, had conquered her timidity and reserve; or, that the secret papers which, it was said, she had received from her father appeared to her a certain pledge of gratitude and favour to offer to Louis XVIII., she decided on soliciting an audience, and presented herself before the King.

She appeared in his presence armed with what most embellishes a woman in the eyes of a prince,—timidity, supplication, and tears. The King was more than dazzled, he was touched. He raised the young suppliant, made her sit down, conversed

Madame du Cayla's interview.

with her about her father, about her children, and about her misfortunes. He enjoyed the charms of her conversation as much as the beauty of her face, and after having granted her more than she had dared to ask, he gave her permission to retire, as late as possible, desiring her himself to return to see him on stated days, and telling her that his cabinet would be always open to her whenever she had a wish to express to him.

The plan of seduction conceived by policy had, at the first look, been accomplished by nature. We are never deceived in reckoning on the all-conquering power of beauty, and the intoxication of the eyes of a King. The sentiment of Louis XVIII. for this seductive woman bore from the first day the character of love, which hid from itself, under the name of friendship, what the age of the monarch and the modesty of the lady did not suffer to be avowed; he felt a degree of affection which he said was paternal, and called her his daughter; not daring, either from respect for himself, or respect for her, to give her any other name. The royal family informed by the happy negotiator of the success of his plan, of the inspirations imparted by Madame du Cayla in the intimacy of their interviews, of her increasing ascendancy over the prince, of her wish to reconcile the monarch with his family, saw with pleasure these interviews of the King and the lady, which were concealed as much as possible from the knowledge of the minister. M. de Villèle and his friends were acquainted with it by M. de La Rochefoucauld, and future plans of ministry were already founded upon this friendship.

XXVIII.

The King derived greater pleasure every day from this sweet feminine familiarity. It reminded him of his friendship at an earlier age for the Countess de Balbi, the mental delight of his youthful days. It taught him also that his heart could do without M. Decazes; and that there was, in the friendship of a young woman with a man of his age, as much propriety and more pleasantness than in the ascendancy of a favourite. He began himself to interrogate those around him, as if to

The King's disposition towards her.

sound them respecting the two objects of his favour, and to make them applaud his new sentiments.

One evening he called for M. de La Rochefoucauld, and asked him for his opinion of M. Decazes : " M. Decazes," replied the young courtier, with the instinct of courts, " is the most attractive of men, and the most sincerely attached to the person of the King." " Ah ! " so I say every day," interrupted the prince, " and I am happy to hear him thus spoken of by yourself." " Yes, your majesty," resumed M. de La Rochefoucauld, " M. Decazes has all the qualities of an agreeable man, and a useful minister ; but the exclusive and jealous royalists have committed irremediable faults towards him, they have harrassed him with injustice and bitterness, and by their implacable hostility they have thrown him into the camp of the enemies of the monarchy : he has not had the stoicism to resist these iniquities on the one side, or this interested popularity on the other ; and by the violent and inconsiderate introduction of sixty-four revolutionary names into the Chamber of Peers he has broken the main spring of the government, instead of strengthening it, and he has placed the throne at the mercy of your enemies."

The King listened without refuting him.

" And what is your opinion," added the King, " of Madame Du Cayla ? " The sincere courtier had no occasion to recur to adulation, or complaisance, to utter to the King the most ardent encomiums on the private favourite of his heart. The King listened, and even enhanced the eulogium. M. de La Rochefoucauld learned from this that M. Decazes still subjugated, but that his fair friend had already intoxicated the mind of the monarch. He acquainted his friends with this conversation ; and it was felt that time was secretly undermining the minister, but that they must still wait to overturn him.

XXIX

Such was the disposition of the King, and the progress of this attempt upon his heart on the evening of the Duke de Berry's assassination. We have seen that M. de Vitrolles, on

The royal family with the King.

his side, anxious to break every tie between the Count d'Artois and his brother, and to effect the triumph of ultra-royalism by the outburst and violence of this schism in the royal family, conjured his prince to marry again. The following day he conjured him to demand openly from the King the immediate dismissal of M. Decazes, and to tell his brother that he must choose between his family and his minister. The Count d'Artois, whose mind was troubled at the same time by his paternal grief and his political alarm, and by the ambitious promptings of his counsellors, assembled around him what the poniard had still left him of his family, his son the Duke d'Angoulême, and his daughter-in-law, a living reproach to the revolution. The royal family thus decimated repaired to the King's apartment, and were announced to him. Louis XVIII. expected this melancholy visit, and felt himself too weak to resist it. What could he say to a father, a brother, a daughter, and a niece, mourning for a son, a brother, and a cousin, murdered the evening before, the silent accusers of a system to which they attributed their catastrophe, and coming to present themselves as victims marked out beforehand for similar attempts. The King, the princes, and the princess, continued a long time silently looking at each other through their tears, without daring to say what was sufficiently indicated by their countenances and their proceeding: the King feeling that they wanted to deprive him of his minister, and the princes understanding that in imploring they came to command.

The Duchess d'Angoulême, bolder as being a woman, and because the demand in her mouth preserved the appearance and the pathos of a prayer, at length broke the silence: "Sire," she said, in an accent which seemed to comprise all the tears and all the blood of her family, "we are proceeding towards another revolution. Stop it while yet there is time! Your throne has occasion for every support." M. Decazes has too deeply injured the royalists to admit of his joining them; let him retire, and all will unite in bringing aid to your government."

"M. Decazes," replied the King to his niece with a stern aspect, "has defended my authority against men who may

Scene between the)

the Count d'Artois.

have done me real service, but who yield with a bad grace to the restraint of the laws, and who openly league themselves with a party that would do violence to my prudence, in order to lead me into a course of which I disapprove. This was the duty of a faithful minister."

Then raising his voice, and looking round with mingled pride and anger; "M. Decazes," he added, "has done nothing but in conformity with my sentiments, my principles, and my will. When a distinction is made in the tribune of the Chambers, between my royal will and the acts of my ministers, I can understand it; but that here, even in the bosom of my own family, this puerile distinction should be drawn, is a thing that I can only look upon as an intentional offence."

"Then, Sire," said the Count d'Artois, recalling to mind the violent counsels of M. de Vitrolles, "it is impossible for me to continue at the Tuileries, if M. Decazes, publicly accused of complicity in the death of my son, by M. Clausel de Coussergues, appears again as minister in this palace!"

In repeating, without qualifying it, the odious imputation of men of his party, the prince adopted it in his own mind, and gave consistency, in the excess of his grief, to a shameful calumny. The King was indignant at hearing from the lips of his brother an accusation which by impeaching his minister incriminated even himself, and reproached him with the blood of a nephew. "What, my brother," he exclaimed, "is it when a faithful and unfortunate minister is persecuted by a calumny, the extravagance of which is equal to its atrocity, that you would urge me to dismiss a man who is devoted to me? The deputies themselves, his enemies, have repelled this accusation with horror, and should I appear to believe it when, on the contrary, it is repugnant to every sentiment of my breast! I declare to you that I have never known a more sincere and more sensitive heart than that of M. Decazes; I am convinced he would have given his life to save that of my nephew, as he would give it up for me. I respect the errors of your grief; mine is not less cruel, but it shall not, however, force me to be unjust!"

The Count d'Artois, thunderstruck by the energetic look

Interview of the King with M. Decazes.

and accent of his brother, made no reply. He felt that though the dignity and justice of the King might repel injunction and menace, his heart perhaps, would not resist a prayer. He accordingly, with his son and the Duchess of Angoulême, approached the King's chair, and all three kneeling before their uncle and their brother, "Sire," said the daughter of Louis XVI., recalling by her attitude and dejection the disheartened victim, the daughter and sister, niece and aunt of cherished victims, "Our family has been sorely tried by calamity! let it, however, be consoled by union! do not refuse it the favour it prays for on its knees!"

"This favour," added the Count d'Artois sobbing, "I beg for, as a sacrifice to the manes of my unfortunate son!"

The King had softened from indignation to compassion for his family: his mind resisted, but his heart was bent. "You will have it so," he sorrowfully exclaimed; "well then, you shall be satisfied!" The princes retired, and the report of the successful attempt they had been counselled to make, gratified the hatred and ambition of their adherents. The King sent for M. Decazes, with whom he had a long and moving interview, refusing with generous obstinacy the resignation which the minister begged him to accept, to simplify the transaction, and to offer himself as a sacrifice to the concord of the family. "Ah! my child," exclaimed the King, more vanquished by a sense of propriety than by conviction in his struggle with his brother, "it is not you they would injure, but me!" M. Decazes did not endeavour, like so many other ministers dismissed under so many reigns, to increase the embarrassment of the crown by pushing his master into an opposite extreme, in order to make himself necessary by making the government difficult or impossible after him. He counselled the King to have recourse to the Duke de Richelieu, a man who could not be attacked by the royalists, and who was acceptable to the monarchical liberals; and he himself undertook to convince and conciliate his successor. More a friend than a disgraced minister in this circumstance, the favourite showed himself superior to the weakness of resentment. He justified in his fall the King who had exalted him.

Retirement of M. Decazes.

The Duke de Richelieu, convinced by experience of the difficulty of pleasing a family divided among itself, and instructed by the *note secrète* of the snares laid by the adherents of the Count d'Artois, would not consent to accept the ministry until he had had a conference with this prince. The Count d'Artois gave his word as a gentleman, that he would support the ministry with all the power of public opinion which he commanded in the palace, in the royalist journals, in the peerage, and in the Chamber of Deputies. The Duke de Richelieu thought he had thus made sure of the prince, but he soon perceived he had not made sure of the party.

The ministry was formed on the 21st February. The Duke de Richelieu presided over the Council of Ministers without a department, M. de Serres was appointed in his absence to the home department, and his place was provisionally supplied by M. Siméon, an old and consummate tactician in public affairs and in the assemblies, whose previous life offered guarantees to the liberals, and whose loyalty gave security to royalism. The Count d'Artois, that he might have an adherent in the ministry, introduced into it M. Capelle, who had been appointed, no one knew whence, to the prefecture of Florence under the Empire. He was a cherished protégé, it was said, of Eliza, sister to Napoleon and grand Duchess of Tuscany; disgraced after 1814, for having too easily yielded to the forces of the allies, he followed the Count d'Artois to Ghent during the hundred-days, was useful to this prince by his administrative experience, and devoted himself to his fortunes with a zeal which never after belied itself. M. Mounier, to whom the Duke de Richelieu offered a department, declined it with a modesty that enhanced the value of his talents. Wishing rather to serve than to ascend, he contented himself with the direction general of police, reassuring both parties by his vigilance and his moderation. M. Portalis, whose name figures under every regime, as one of those servants of the state, who attach themselves more to the functions than the principles of government, and who make a sort of appanage of high employments, replaced M. Siméon in the sub-direction of justice. M. Pasquier kept the department

The new ministry.

of foreign affairs, passing from one ministry to another, with a pliability of mind and zeal which made him acceptable to all. M. Portal kept the marine, M. Roy the finances, M. de Latour-Maubourg, the war-office. With a few exceptions, it was still the ministry of M. Decazes, he himself being left out. His spirit survived his fall: the King had only sacrificed his name.

After this sacrifice the King loaded his ex-minister with tokens of attachment, which testified the continuance of his personal confidence in the favourite whom political necessity had wrested from his heart. He conferred upon him the title of Duke, appointed him ambassador to London, with a salary which placed the fortune of his minister on a level with the fortunes of the British aristocracy; to which he added munificent gifts, and tears more honorable to the minister than donations. M. Decazes departed for England with the entire affection of his master, the hatred of the royalists, the ingratitude of the liberals, and the regret of the ambitious and deposed *Doctrinaires* who had shared in his fall, but who saw in his removal a passing eclipse of favour, and a certain pledge of a secret ascendancy and a second fortune.

XXX.

Thus disappeared, for ever, this young minister, the accidental creation of circumstances, of the favour of a king, and of the unpractised struggle of parties. The indecision and bewilderment of a Restoration forgotten in a long exile, on replacing its foot amidst darkness, on a soil which it had not yet sounded, gave at this first moment a large scope to favouritism. Government was no longer conducted by absolute authority, it was not as yet conducted by authority in the Chambers; the government, in fact, was nothing but an alternation of *coups d'état*, sometimes for, and at other times against the charter, victory being given in turn by the King's hand to the two parties which royalty endeavoured to balance. M. Decazes, marked out by chance, and remarkable for his zeal, won his political fortune by his courage, confirmed it by

Résumé of M. Decazes.

his urbanity, merited it by the sagacity of his views, shook it by excessive compliances, some of them deplorable, first to the court party, then to the opposition, and lost it finally by a catastrophe of which he was innocent, and of which the malignity of the times wished to make him an accomplice while he was only its victim. His fidelity to his master and his benefactor was complete, his conduct was variable, and his system, which was only the system of the King, was that of a statesman. It consisted in energetically interposing royalty, the moderator of the new ideas, between the royalists eager for reaction, and the liberals impatient for liberty. There was none other practicable to make the country acceptable to royalty, and royalty to the country. It was the policy of the King matured by reflection in solitude. To carry it into execution the King required a new man, young and without other prospect than his personal favour; that, being independent of the royalist and revolutionary parties, he should have no signification but in himself, and no future prospect but in the charter. The King had found this man in M. Decazes, and had attached himself to him with an obstinacy which partook at least as much of policy as of friendship. M. Decazes was not only the favourite of a king, but the favourite of a system, and in falling he dragged down the system with him. When the royalists attained power they were compelled to restore this fallen system and to practice it after him. M. de Villèle was the Decazes of the royalist majority, as M. Decazes had been the Villèle of the King. For this reason his name will appear in history above the names of the common race of favourites, who only represent the caprice of kings; M. Decazes is the representative of a just idea, the reconciliation of a revolution and a royalty. He was the statesman of concord, of impartiality and of the charter; and if he was not strong enough to separate parties ferociously bent on destroying each other, he had the glory of falling between them with the only truth which could perpetuate the throne of his master.

His greatest error was not in his fall, but in reappearing upon the scene after he had honourably quitted it. His proper asylum was retirement, his dignity inaction, his greatness the

Impolicy of the re-appearance of M. Decazes after his retirement.

future. When a man has approached so closely to the heart of a king, and personified with him one of those epochs which constitute eras in the annals of a nation, he should disappear with the events in which he has embodied his name. The name of M. Decazes should disappear with Louis XVIII. History recognises such names in obscurity, but never again in the crowd. Fallen from the summit of power, the statesman rises no more until time has embalmed his memory. isolation is the majesty of disgrace.

BOOK THIRTY-EIGHTH.

Opening of the debates on the law of election—M. Royer Collard, his previous life and character—Speeches of M.M. Lainé, Camille Jordan, and Foy—Passing of the bill—Trial and execution of Louvel—Increasing hatred to the Bourbons: Secret Societies, Bonapartists, Counter-Revolutionists—M. Madier—Montjau denounces to the Chambers, the royalist conspiracies of the South—Birth of the Duke de Bordeaux—Revival of the spirit of independence in Europe: error of those who have ascribed the honour of it to Napoleon—Its real causes: ideas of nationality instilled by the European kings, to resist the Napoleonic absorption—Revolution in Spain—Retrospective glance: Decay of that monarchy: Palace intrigues: Theocratical terrorism—The Prince of the Peace—Charles IV., his abdication and captivity—Heroism of Spain, the Cortes, the constitution of 1812—Return of Ferdinand VII.: reaction:—O'Donnell—Revolutionary explosion: Riégo, Mina—Italy—State of this country in 1820: erroneous opinions concerning it—Carbonarism—Movement at Naples: Guglielmo Pepe—Equivocal conduct of the court—Intervention of the Northern courts: congress of Troppau, of Laybach: conclusion of the revolution at Naples—Movement in Piedmont—Carbonarism in France—Napoleon at St. Helena: his captivity—The "memorial": unskillful justification of his memory—Hudson Lowe—Illness of Napoleon: his death: review of his reign

THE serious and prolonged emotion produced by the death of the Duke de Berry, the expectation of his posthumous issue, the fall of the favourite, the satisfaction given to the royal family, and the character, at once monarchical and moderate of the ministry, seemed to soothe for a moment the irritation of the royalist party, and the alarms of the liberals. But this calm was only the funeral truce. The laws for the censorship of the press, for the suppression of individual liberty, and the electoral law, prepared by M. Decazes, and laid before the

Opening of the debates on the law of election.

Chambers, with some modifications, by the new ministry, caused an explosion of rage which was envenomed by the blood of the prince, and which could no longer be restrained in the hearts of the people. M. Pasquier frankly avowed to the Chamber that in these laws the government really demanded a dictatorship. "It is a dictatorship given to a party thirsting for vengeance," responded Manuel. Benjamin Constant emboldened by the election which had absolved his double defection of 1814 and 1815, attacked the characters of ministers with a bitterness of invective as though it had no retaliation to dread; M. de Lafayette spoke in the tone of a master experienced in revolutions, predicting in their apparent slumber their approaching triumph; General Foy, as a loyal citizen, who participates in the grief of kings, but who refuses to offer up hecatombs of freedom at their mourning. Irritated by the insulting apostrophes of the deputies of the right, he designated as *a handful of wretches* the men who had hailed the triumph of the foreigners over their country. At these words an emigrant, a relative of Charlotte Corday, the deliverer of her country by a crime resembling that of Judith, arose and hurled at the general, one of those insulting reprisals which the Romans despised and the French wash out with blood. The two adversaries exchanged shots on the following day without any fatal results; after which the general ascended the tribune, and satisfied the honour of the emigrant, who on his part rendered homage to the courage of the patriots. The right applauded this mutual reparation; the left astonished at the condescension of the general, murmured and seemed to reject all justice and all peace. The implacable animosity of the one side, excited party excesses on the other. The revolution and the counter-revolution personified, looked each other in the face during the long debates on all the questions involved in the proposed laws. M. Benoist exclaimed that the counter-revolution was accomplished, and that the charter was nothing but its reign. A deputy of the South, a conscientious echo of the clergy, to whom all controversy tolerated in matters of faith, was an impiety of thought, declared that liberty was the greatest plague that could be inflicted upon nations. Manuel denounced to the country, the

Agitation of the capital.

new alliance between the government and the men of 1815, deposed by the 5th of September, and these men he called the factious. The capital, excited every evening by the noise of these combats of the day in the Chambers, took fire at these flashes of the orators. Mobs were formed in the public places, the students, the disbanded officers, the conspirators of secret societies, as yet masked under an appearance of respect for the charter; those who were discontented without cause and seditious without party, the men who float with every breeze on the surface of great populations, began to boil and bubble at stated hours, at the silent signal of the assemblages. The police watched them, harassed them, and only increased their numbers by attempting to disperse them. Paris presented every night the aspect and the presage of revolutions. In the midst of this fermentation the ministry brought forward the electoral law, which was to disarm the nation, and decree with the double vote a political privilege to the aristocratical classes in the departments.

II

On the 6th of May the discussion, preceded by so many storms, opened amongst 120 speakers, ranged on both sides of public opinion, to attack, or to defend the cause which the government threw in as a fire-brand of desperate struggle between the revolution and the crown. General Foy demonstrated in every page of our annals for several ages past, the increasing equality of rights amongst the national classes, and that the new order of things could be fixed and unshaken solely upon the basis of this civic equality. This is the doctrine of the rights of man, the theoretic code of the revolution, elucidated by sound reason and a moderate conscience. "To support the throne upon an aristocracy in such a country," concluded the orator, "is to support it upon an abyss!" M. de Labourdonnais, the boldest and most eloquent of the leaders of the right, and the most popular in the saloons of the aristocracy, loudly advocated privilege as a necessity of the monarchy. "It can no longer be saved but by those most interested in it, and the

The Doctrinaire party.

most interested are the most wealthy. Let royalty choose, therefore, it is for it a question of life or death! The revolution advances, and the *oriflamme* is about to disappear before the tri-coloured flag!"

The assembly split into two parties without any intermediate power, was fluctuating backwards and forwards without any counterpoise. Two men attempted to form one; these were the chiefs of the *Doctrinaire* party, who had fallen from power with M. Decazes, imperceptible in number, powerful in talent, incapable of long bearing disgrace or inaction, Bona partist before 1814, royalist in 1815, liberal under M. Decazes, discontented after him, lending themselves to everything without committing themselves to any, and offering themselves to both parties with a skilful reserve to govern them, the one by the other, and to magnify themselves by their divisions. Messieurs Guizot, De Staël, De Broglie, De Barante, De Saint-Aulaire, and many young men who felt in them the stimulus of their capacity and their future ambition, comprised the nucleus of this third party. M. Lainé, and M. de Serres, the two greatest characters, and the two most pathetic orators of the Restoration, had been for a moment caressed by them, and seduced by that lofty neutrality between the factions, which is the tendency of elevated minds. But their disinterested ambition, which only aspired to virtue, and which totally overlooked itself in the interests of their country, had already detached them from this little group, too much resembling a sect, and too narrow to contain their lofty souls. Two other orators celebrated for their services to royalty, consecrated by the proscriptions, invested with the authority of age and the probity of their lives, collected around them at that time these young neophytes without a master. These were M. Royer Collard, and M. Camille Jordan

III.

M. Royer Collard was already bordering on old age, but it was that green old age which is merely the maturity of thought. He was in body and mind an antique figure, unshaken in the

M. Royer-Collard.

midst of this modern and excitable world. His stature was lofty and powerful, his countenance stern, his look penetrating and austere, his mien majestic, his attitude sedate, his mouth generally closed, and never more than half unbending his brow by a smile full of reserve, and sometimes of disdain. He appeared amidst these assemblies, at the summit of which he sat apart, formed of colder and less material clay than those by whom he was surrounded. He did not break forth in great splendour, for no great work of action, of literature, or of eloquence had ever illustrated his name, but he broke forth, so to speak, in mystery. It was felt that his shadows concealed great lights; people believed in him, and waited upon his accents, they hoped and they feared great things from this man. He was that sort of oracle from whom long speeches are not expected, but whose single word is sufficient to cause silence and long thought amongst the superstitious faithful. Everything was mysterious in the life and physiognomy of this old man.

Born of a rural family of much consideration in Champagne, the least excitable province of all France—though it did give birth to Danton—he had been, it was said, secretary of the revolutionary commune of Paris under Péthion; naturally averse to the crimes and excesses of the multitude, he had passed through the revolution in the loneliness and grief of a man who escapes from the crowd by obscurity. He afterwards took refuge in speculative philosophy, for which his reasoning and controversial genius had more aptitude than for politics, the science of instinct and impulse. He had kept a school and formed a sect in this vague and systematic teaching of philosophy. His lessons and his books had revealed his name to a small number of those who agitate their minds for or against systems in an age of action. But that celebrity which has no judges is the most fascinating and the least contested of all, because the indolence of public opinion is better pleased to form a judgment upon hearsay than upon words.

Though buried to appearance in these speculations of philosophy, M. Royer-Collard connected with M. Bécquet, a man of equal virtue but of more activity, had been pointed out to

Previous life and character of M. Royer-Collard.

the King, Louis XVIII., at Hartwell, as one of the leaders of public opinion at Paris, the most hostile to the despotism of Napoleon, and to his destruction of nationalities and liberties under the name of conquests. M. Royer-Collard aspired from that time to a government in which the monarchical right, moderate because it is inviolable, might be reconciled with the freedom of thinking and voting in a liberal constitution. He had accepted the dangerous title of correspondent of Louis XVIII. at Paris; he had formed a part of that secret council, of which M. Becquet and the Abbé de Montesquiou were members, not to conspire against Napoleon, but to guide from afar the mind of the exiled King through all the obscurities of public opinion in France. Napoleon was aware of the existence of this secret council, but did not punish it even with disgrace. He rather preferred, as better policy, that the pretender should receive intelligence from prudent and temporising men, than the turbulent excitement of dangerous conspirators against his government and his life.

IV.

On the return of the Bourbons, M. Royer-Collard, thus accredited beforehand with the King by his services, and by the testimonials of M. de Montesquiou and of M. Becquet, had, from the first day, the ear of the sovereign, the favour of the princes, authority in the council, and popularity amongst the electors. He had not abused these advantages to further his ambition. This ambition, lofty as his thoughts, cold as his character, was disinterested as to fortune and honours. He liked to advise more than to govern. The irresponsible part of an oracle suited him and pleased him. To be listened to, was for him to reign. He had accepted, and even with difficulty, the modest direction of public instruction during these five years. Religious, but imbued with the stern dogmas of *Jansenism*, that Christian stoicism, he had watched rigidly that public instruction confided to the university should not glide, as an instrument of power, into the hands of a priesthood equally hostile to philosophy and *Jansenism*. At the moment

M. Royer-Collard as an orator.

when M. Decazes, on the point of falling, had turned towards the royalists, and had allied himself with them instead of maintaining his compact with the *Doctrinaires*, M. Royer-Collard, irritated at this defection, had retired from his public functions. He was going for the first time, to take a great part in the deliberations of the Assembly. His eloquence was a phenomenon in the Chamber. His speeches were not only written beforehand, but erased and altered with incessant labour, to arrive by force of meditation and study, at that logical concatenation in which not a single link is wanting to the continuous chain of thought. The nature of his eloquence inclined farther to that force and perfection of speech and of phrase, which concentrates, abridges, and illumines every word by the reflection or by the contrast of the proceeding or following, and which constitutes eloquence no longer the expression but even the algebra of politics. It was an eloquence more adapted to the pulpits of the church, or the chair of the pedagogue, than to the tribune of political assemblies. To give it full value it should be uttered amidst profound silence and be studied by the audience as it had been by the orator.

M. Royer-Collard had gained over this auditory beforehand by the majesty of his mind, and by that popularity disdainful in appearance, but very solicitous at bottom of success, which skilfully courts the favour of the masses even by the indifference that is manifested for their applause. There was much pride in the disdain of M. Royer-Collard, but there was also much secret fawning on popularity in this pride; he frequently gave offence, but he did not offend every one at the same time; when he wounded his own party he caressed the other. His character was eminently calculated to constitute him an orator of all oppositions, because he was essentially critical, because he saw impropriety everywhere, because he took the initiative and the responsibility in nothing; and thus serving all discontents and all negotiations, he himself escaped criticism by the sovereign indecision of his own mind. An honest, but a great sophist, he threw by turns the weight of his doubts into every balance, incapable of coming to a conclusion unless by a censure, and still more incapable of acting, for action is the

Debates on the dictatorial laws.

conclusion of a will. He half read his speeches, open before him on the marble of the tribune, but committed beforehand to memory. His voice had the weight and gravity of his thoughts; it fell with the authority of his life, which was pure and retired within itself, which gave no scope to calumny, and but little to envy, and which seemed to be animated by only three passions superior to those of the crowd—logic, morals, and virtue.

Camille Jordan, whose previous career we have already sketched entered after M. Royer-Collard into public life, with a fame matured in long obscurity, and consecrated by proscription. Integrity was the principal character of his talent. Having combated and suffered much for royalty, in the time of its adversity, he had a right to advise it in its power. The royalists could not disavow him without ingratitude, and the moderates were proud of attracting to them an orator who could not be accused of faction.

V

These two voices gave great strength to the opposition in the debates on the dictatorial laws, and especially on the law of election. Royer-Collard, in a memorable speech, established the fact that the French soil had devoured privilege for ever, and conquered equality. "A law to re-establish them," he exclaimed in conclusion, "will not stand! Force alone will govern!" M. de Villèle, an organ more than ever in favour with the royalist majority, defended the measures of the minister, having already come to a private understanding with him and his friends, through the cabinet of the Count d'Artois, and the new favourite, Madame du Cayla. M. Lainé, a man of quick and heroic impressions, convinced by his sensibility, by the crime of Louvel, and by the conspiracies of the Bonapartists, turned round, with a sincere abnegation of self-love, against the law which he himself had promulgated two years before, and recognised the urgency of a law preservative of the monarchy; a fault of constancy, but excusable from that passion for the public weal which filled his breast, and which made him know-

Speeches of Camille Jordan, M. Pasquier, and General Foy.

ingly sacrifice his popularity to what he considered the integrity of a repentance. Camille Jordan, then in a dying state, caused himself to be borne to the tribune to refute M. Lainé, his friend, and to predict to the royalists in his last words, the destiny that awaited them. "I withdraw myself with grief," he said, "from the ministers, who were my friends, and I do not hesitate to declare this bill to be the most fatal that has ever issued from the council of Kings, since those councils of fatal memory which beset and ruined the unfortunate race of the Stuarts! It is the divorce between the nation and the family that governs us." Such auguries from such a mouth powerfully shook the convictions of many, whose votes they held in suspense. M. Pasquier, the sole and indefatigable organ of the ministry, raised himself to an elevation of eloquence and courage which he had never before attained. He refuted with circumstantial sophistry the most skilful and the most habitual of the two oppositions, that of the *Doctrinaires* by arguments, and that of the liberals by defiance. He boldly sustained the cause of an aristocracy of property, as the basis of political power, and a necessary counterpoise to the instability of the multitude. "The aristocracy," replied General Foy, "has lost nothing during the last struggles of the country against the coalition of 1815. Not a hair of its head has been touched; nevertheless, it has since then extended between the throne and the people, its hand armed with a foreign sword! It has stained with blood the sceptre of our Kings! Woe to those who recognise in my words a picture of themselves! It has overthrown the nation, and planted mourning in the bosom of families. It never checks its career, it conspires for ever. Do you wish for a proof?" He unfolded a paper of the day, in which M. de Chateaubriand soothed the impatience of the royalists, and drew up a programme of a government after their own hearts. "Listen," said he, "and judge!" The general read, amidst a silence, which was broken by the indignation of the left, and by ironical cheers from the right, the programme of the government of the illustrious writer, the organ at that time of the discontented aristocracy. This programme, founded upon the anti-popular paradoxes of the Count

Disturbances in the capital.

de Maistre, of M. Bonald, and of the bishops of the restored church, called for a monarchy of the nobility—the suppression of the law of recruiting and promotion, which gave rank in the army to the blood that was shed for the country, and not to hereditary rights—the re-establishment of religious intolerance—the monarchical re-constitution of the provinces, and corporations—the resurrection of an aristocracy—the feudal entail of inalienable estates in favour of the peerage—unnamed measures against that division of property which, according to M. Chateaubriand, was to throw France under an agrarian law and turn it into a fatal democracy, by the suppression of the right of primogeniture understood in that measure—finally, a pecuniary reparation to those families that had lost their estates in the revolution!

The reading of this counter-revolutionary manifesto unsealed the eyes of some wavering members, and delighted the hearts of the royalists. The tumult of conflicting opinions in the Chamber reverberated outside. The people and the students awaited the liberal orators upon the bridges to offer them an ovation, and to load them with encouragement and acclamation. The troops, in repressing these triumphs, only gave more courage to the popular sedition; the mob increased, the soldiers charged, and a student was killed in the affray. His blood cried for vengeance; Camille Jordan, Laffitte, Benjamin Constant, Manuel, and Girardin denounced these murders to the Assembly, and related the dangers and insults they themselves had suffered in passing through the myrmidons of the police. On the retirement of the deputies, the mob collected in mass, amidst cries of “Vive la Charte!” and formed a column of five or six thousand men, under the direction of disbanded officers and liberal journalists. They advanced along the Boulevards, recruiting on their route all those lovers of mischief and sedition who are to be found in the cafes and public places of a capital in a state of ebullition; they marched to the faubourgs, to summon to their assistance the dregs of the populace, the standing army of revolutions. Thirty or forty thousand workmen responded to their call and marched upon the Hotel de Ville, to muster there, as in 1792, prepara-

tory to an attack upon the Tuileries. The cavalry and the royal guard charged and dispersed them even under the porticos of the churches. The night-brewed fresh disturbances for the following day. The minister being attacked in the Chamber for the defensive force he had displayed, was covered by M. de Serres, who had resumed his place in the tribune and in the council. Instead of defending himself, however, he attacked the factions even in the Assembly, with a desperate boldness which called to memory the Roman orator against Cataline. Casimir P rier declared, "that the deputies could not deliberate under oppression." Words like these circulating a few moments after amongst the mob outside, inflamed the people with fresh animosity. Every evening the troops and the multitude bivouacked on the public places, insulting and charging each other by turns upon the quays, and at the Porte Saint-Denis;—blood was shed every day. Paris resembled a camp in which two nations stood face to face, the one to impose, the other not to submit to the ministerial law. The King, surrounded by numerous military forces, apprehended nothing for himself; but he lamented in secret the sacrifice of his minister which had been exacted from him, and he was alarmed on account of his family for the consequences of this open war between the people and the aristocracy. M. Decazes was wanting to his attachment, as well as to his policy. These agitations constituted a silent reproach which both his eye and his heart addressed to his brother, for those exactions which had bereft him of his friend.

VI

The watchwords of this agitation were renewed at every sitting, in the speeches of the opposition members. "For the last eight days," cried M. Laffitte, "blood has not ceased to flow in Paris. One hundred thousand of the peaceable inhabitants of the capital were charged upon, sabred, and trodden under the feet of the horses yesterday by the cuirassiers!" "Here is the blade of a sabre broken by the blow!" said M. de Corc lles, exhibiting the fragment of steel with a thea-

Trial and execution of Louvel.

trical gesture. "The indignation of the capital is at its height," resumed Laffitte; "agitation has reached the people. Tremble for to-morrow!" "Blood is flowing, and you refuse to hear us," again exclaimed M. de Corcelles. "It is infamous!" At these outcries, the Chamber rising like two opposing waves which threatened to burst in upon each other, the president was compelled to separate the parties by putting on his hat. Benjamin Constant stirred up the flame again when it was subsiding, with the breath of his bitter and provoking words. Prudent men, alarmed at this constant ebullition of a people kept in continuous agitation for five-and-twenty days, now, by the murder of the Duke de Berry, and sometimes by the blood mutually shed by the people and the soldiers, endeavoured to stifle these germs of revolution by one of those compromises which offer a pretext for the appeasing of assemblies. Courvoisier, a liberal emigrant, had proffered one, but M. de Serres had refused it in the name of the government, as a weakness which would appear to place the factious in the right. Courvoisier having withdrawn his proposition, another member of the centre, M. Bouin, reproduced it in his own name; it reduced in appearance the offensive privilege of the double vote conferred upon the rich, and it was carried. The entire law triumphed, to the misfortune of royalty, after stormy debates, which recalled the scenes of the National Convention. The people being kept down in the public places retired in anger, and secret conspiracies began to be hatched, in the absence of public tumults.

During these commotions, Louvel, the assassin of the Duke de Berry, was tried by the Chamber of Peers. He denied nothing, he recognised the poniard, he himself called the act a horrible crime; he was affected at the magnanimity of his victim, who had implored the King for his pardon while dying by his hand. The only sentiment he expressed was "brutal hatred, stronger than his reason, against a family to which, in his ignorance, he attributed the invasion and the calamities of the country. He walked to the scaffold with the stoical indifference of a man who regrets nothing in this world, and hopes for nothing in the next; a brutal image of that fatality which

Increasing hatred to the Bourbons.

kills for the sake of killing, without glory, repentance, or remorse for the blow it has struck.

VII.

His blood, very far from extinguishing the reviving hatred to the Bourbons, seemed to reanimate and embitter it the more. M. de Lafayette declared to his friends that open force was henceforth the only efficacious weapon to overthrow a government which had declared war against the equality of classes. Emissaries were despatched from this centre to sound the disposition of the troops and departments. The parliamentary opposition of M.M. Laffitte and Casimir Périér was unwittingly associated with the tendencies and manifestations common to the irreconcilable conspirators collected round Lafayette, d'Argenson, Manuel, Corcelles, Rey, Tarrayre, and Mérilhou. This conspiracy found innumerable accomplices, without the trouble of seducing them, in the schools, in the disbanded military—remnants of the army of Napoleon—in the sub-officers of the new army, in the small number of the republicans, in the Bonapartists as numerous as the discontented, and finally in the purchasers of emigrants' estates, trembling more and more at the presence and menaces of the old proprietors, despoiled of their inheritance, and now protected by the power of the government.

A captain of the legion of La Meurthe in garrison at Paris, named Nantil, a half-pay colonel named Sauzet, a disbanded colonel of the Imperial Guard named Maziau, Dumoulin, an old orderly officer of Napoleon, Rey, a member of the directing committee of all these plots, Bérard, *chef de bataillon* of the legion of the Côtes du Nord, allotted to different posts by Nantil, resolved to give the signal and the rallying point to all these scattered forces of the conspiracy, by surprising the fortress of Vincennes, corrupting the regiments in Paris, raising the faubourgs, and assaulting the Tuileries. A great number of the generals of the Empire, unemployed or in disgrace in Paris, as generals Pajol, Bachelu, Merlin, Maransin, Laffitte, and officers of rank, as Ordener, Fabvier, Caron, Deutzel, and

Plots and secret societies.

Brice, entered into the plans of the conspirators: the overthrow of the government being their known and avowed object. Lafayette wished to replace it by a republic, or a constitutional prince, responsible to the revolution, and tied up in the trammels of a representative democracy. The great mass proposed the dethronement of the Bourbons and the reign of Napoleon II., the fascination of the soldiers and the people. Impatience of overturning, at any risk, hurried Lafayette, as usual, into a complicity from which he would not reap the fruit for his ideas. But his violent hostility to a Restoration which he had hailed with pleasure five years before, but which had not realised his hopes, entirely obscured his foresight. All were agreed upon destroying, without any explanation as to what they should reconstruct upon the ruins. There was but little good faith in this coalition of hatred, the Bonapartists being certain of turning the triumph to the advantage of their military cause by the army they would corrupt, and the liberals certain of seeing the confusion of the republic effected by a victory of the pretorians, to which they lent all their energies, thus deceiving their party without being able to deceive themselves. Perhaps Lafayette was in hopes that in the impossibility of obtaining Napoleon II. from the court of Vienna, the army would decree him a dictatorship, which he had had in 1790, had dreamt of in 1815, but which a Bonapartist revolution might give him from 1820 to 1826, and which he again allowed to escape him in 1830. However this might be, a great harmony of feeling was effected through all the regiments in Paris and in the great garrison towns. The night was fixed for the surprise of the castle of Vincennes. Captain Nantil and Captain Capès were to move off their legion and direct the attack. M. de Lafayette had gone to his chateau of La Grange, in order to second the movement of Vincennes by a rising of his département. M. d'Argenson had hastened to Alsace, where his popularity and benevolence had won for him the hearts of all the workmen in his forges. M. de St. Aignan had gone to Nantes. M. de Corcelles, the relation and friend of Lafayette, a man whose fiery temperament urged him on to tumultuous clamours in the public assemblies, and to extreme

Explosion of the conspiracy.

resolutions in the secret cabals, had been charged to raise the immense and formidable manufacturing classes of Lyons, always ready armed for civil commotions, and whose example would give a second capital to the revolution once begun at Paris.

An accidental explosion of powder having taken place in the fortress of Vincennes on the eve of the day fixed by the conspirators, the civil and military police were on the alert in this principal focus of the revolution. The conspirators hesitated and put off their attempt, and informers acquainted the government with it. Nantil fled, the suspected officers were arrested, the legions which had been tampered with by the chiefs removed from Paris, and the conspiracy, badly consolidated and half extinct, was brought before the tribunal of the Chamber of Peers. But whether from insufficient evidence, or apprehension on the part of the government of discovering too many and too powerful accomplices, or from the secret connivance of a part of the Chamber of Peers, composed of Napoleon's generals, culpable in their hearts of the same repugnance as the conspirators, all the chiefs were acquitted, and some of the secondary instruments only condemned to slight punishments. The conspiracy, rather interrupted than defeated, was everywhere renewed by the same hands which had concocted the first plot.

VIII

While the revolution was thus conspiring with impunity, the counter-revolution was, on its side, conspiring in the shade. A young magistrate of Nismes, M. Madier de Montjau, the son and nephew of royalists, who had been signalised during the reign of terror for their courageous fidelity to the throne of Louis XVI., an ardent young man eager for service, had been a witness, during the recent massacres in the South, of the favour with which the ultras of the Catholic party were treated in the correspondence emanating from the circle of the Count d'Artois. At the moment when the Duke d'Angoulême, who had been summoned from Toulouse to Nismes, was stanching

M. Madier de Montjau.

the blood and pacifying this turbulent city, this young magistrate had imparted his alarms to the prince. He had begged him to make overtures of conciliation and protection to the persecuted and fugitive protestants, advice which was too consonant with the benevolence of the Duke d'Angoulême to be displeasing to him. The young prince, indignant at the slaughter of the protestants, and at the assassination of General Lagarde under the eyes and by the hands of men armed for the defence of the throne and laws, had assembled the guilty National Guard of Nismes, and having reproached it, face to face, in heroic terms worthy of the Chancellor de l'Hôpital, with its cowardly connivance in these excesses, he declared his intention of asking the King, his uncle, for its dissolution and disarmament. But these generous words had been scarcely pronounced when orders emanating from the Count d'Artois, commandant general of the National Guards of the kingdom, neutralised the act of the prince, and kept up at Nismes the agitation and tyranny of the ultra party.

M. Madier de Montjau, connected at the same time by his family with the royalists, and by his opinions with the *Doctrinaires* of the party of M. Decazes, the then all-powerful favourite of the King, had read at Nismes one of those anonymous circulars which the hidden factions distributed amongst their adherents, to acquaint them with the wishes and intentions of the superior committees. This circular, written from Paris, in the name of a semi-official royalist committee, the day after the assassination of the Duke de Berry, said to their brethren of Nismes: "Be neither alarmed nor surprised if the crime of the 13th of February has not yet effected the fall of the favourite. Act as if he was already overthrown; we shall drag him from his post if his banishment be not conceded; meanwhile, organise yourselves, information and money shall not fail you!" Audacity like this attested to the eyes of M. Madier de Montjau the great power of those who displayed it. He had conjectured from it the existence of a secret government, acting under the inspiration and supreme direction of the King's brother; but, after all, this pretended government was,

He denounces the machinations of the ultra-royalists to the Chamber.

perhaps, nothing but the ambition and turbulent encroachment of mischievous men who assumed his name and favour

IX

However this may be, the young magistrate eager to signalise his name, to render some service to the moderate side of politics, and to be its martyr, or to merit well at the hands of the partisans of M. Decazes and of the King himself, had gone to Paris during the great debates of the Chamber, resolved to denounce this hidden government to the vengeance of the liberals. Restrained for a long time by the counsels of prudent men averse to disturbance, and encouraged by others, he had been secretly confirmed in his conviction of the existence of a mysterious government, by a written declaration of M. de Lally-Tollendal, an old man with all the giddiness of youth, and who was devoted to M. Decazes. Supported by this authority, M. Madier de Montjau addressed a denunciatory petition to the Chambers, a firebrand of discord in a furnace already in combustion. The discussion of this petition which was, by rending every veil, to discover the mysteries of ambition and of a premature reign in the palace, produced nothing but parliamentary storms. M. de St. Aulaire, father-in-law of M. Decazes, insinuated that family ascendancy was trying to usurp the functions of actual royalty. General Sebastiani reminded the Chamber of the *note secrète* to the foreign powers, emanating, doubtless, from the same centre, and conspiring against the independence of the King's power and of the nation. The petition being rejected by the ministers was sent to the Duke of Richelieu, and by him to the tribunals. The denunciator had the only triumph he could expect, the noise, the agitation, and the certain and merited part of victims who denounce, that which it is impossible to prove, and still more impossible to destroy.

While these conspiracies of all descriptions were thus plotting the ruin of the Restoration, either by its crazy friends

Birth of the Duke de Bordeaux.

or its implacable enemies, providence brought into the world, in the Duke de Bordeaux, another heir, or another victim, of the destinies of this monarchy. The Duchess de Berry, a princess for whom the murder of her husband, and the infant she bore in her womb at the time, had created a touching sympathy in France and Europe generally, felt the pangs of child-birth on the night of the 20th of September, 1820. This fruitfulness so seasonable for the monarchy, revealed for the first time on the bed of death, and which dated the period of gestation some weeks before the murder of the father, had served as a text for the incredulity and irony of the intestine or public enemies of the royal house. It was of consequence that an authentic publicity, in conformity with the usages of the monarchy, should remove all ground for these rumours, and this malignant hatred. Marshal Suchet, and several officers of the guard of the Tuileries, were present at the birth, as irrefragable witnesses of the real maternity of the duchess. The King being apprised of it, hastened, and received the infant in his arms, as a compensation for his sorrows, and a miraculous guarantee for his race. He lifted it up, in the presence of the witnesses, and in conformity with the classical traditions that were dear to his mind, he bathed the lips of the new born child with some drops of the wine which had fortified it was said, before the milk, the heart of Henri IV.

A protest, which is thought to be apocryphical, had been published in the London journals, against the possible birth of a supposed prince. It was attributed to the most interested person, the Duke of Orleans, or to his zealous partisans. This prince disavowed it before Louis XVIII., and the King reproved him. The Duke of Orleans, however, interrogated Marshal Suchet on the reality of the birth, before he would congratulate his niece. The marshal energetically attested the legitimacy of the child, and the duke being satisfied by so undeniable a witness, offered his congratulations at the palace. All France felt emotions of sympathy, of security, and of rejoicing on the birth of this infant. Pity for its father increased the general satisfaction. The people rejoiced that Providence

Rejoicings of the public on this event.

had thus avenged the crime, and dried up the tears of the sufferers. The poets called him the *child of miracle*; the ambassadors called him the child of Europe. Some saw a prodigy, others a principle in his cradle; none could foresee at such a distance the destiny of the Stuarts. Royal munificence, amnesties, and favours of every description fell from the hands of the King, at the solicitation of the young mother. This cradle, exhibited to the world, was for some time a pledge of reconciliation, of hope, and of peace for the nation. The miracle of the birth made the most incredulous superstitious. It was a gift of nature which became in the eyes of France a political power. This child, it was said, brought up under the inspiration of the King, to perpetuate his constitutional work, would escape by his age and his education, the resentments, merited or unmerited, which the jealous revolution nourished against his race; that from him would date the treaty of peace between the conflicting ideas; the *edict of Nantes* of political opinions incarnate in a young king! This family event became in the eyes of all an intervention of Providence in the destiny of the nation. No one imagined that heaven had intervened by so un hoped for a birth to deceive the world and to withdraw its pledges of security and future peace. Such was the spirit of the speeches, the thoughts, and the sentiments which at that time multiplied round the royal cradle. Sinister omens, however, appeared nearly at the same time on two sides of the horizon, in Spain and at Naples.

XI.

It has been said that Napoleon was an armed missionary of liberty and of revolution in Europe, and that in traversing the continent to subdue it, he had willingly sown there the germs of fruitful liberty. This is a sophism invented for the use of the *Sejanuses* of his reign, whereby they were desirous, after his fall, of creating for him a double popularity in the imagination of the people, in order to accumulate around his name all the elements of the opposition which they purposed offering to the Bourbons or to the republic. Napoleon, in all

Revival of the spirit of independence in Europe erroneously attributed to Napoleon

his victories over nationalities, sowed nothing but the terror of his name and resentment against the French. France owes to him its greatest military glory: this is an immense fascination for which the nation must be grateful to his memory; but neither France nor the continent owes to him the love of liberty, unless we call by this name the lassitude of despotism with which he had worn out the nations. By a similar claim it may be equally contended that night produces day, because darkness makes us long for light, and that servitude creates liberty, because it fomented revolt in the souls of the oppressed, and excites them against the oppressor. That which is true, and is attested by all the revelations of his thoughts, and by all his political acts from the 18th of Brumaire to the renewed *concordat* of Charlemagne, to his feudatories and his nobility, and to the silence imposed by him upon thought, under the name of *ideology*, is, that he turned back the current of the whole French revolution; that he pursued the gleams, in order to extinguish them, of the principles of this revolution wherever his sword could attain them in his own country and on the continent; that he employed the force, with which God had endowed him, not to destroy but to revive the absolute authority of theocracies, of aristocracies, and of thrones; that he was at all times the *Julian* of civil liberty and of liberty of conscience, the great antagonist of the philosophy of the eighteenth century through all the universe. A hero certainly, but no apostle, or else an untimely apostle of conquest, of glory, and of material force.

XII.

But what may for a moment have deceived nations as to this pretended apostleship of liberty by the armies of Napoleon, and what may have produced, in his footsteps, or after his fall, symptoms of liberalism here and there upon the continent, is, in the first place that the national feeling of subdued and enslaved people having been invoked by their kings to resist or conquer him, these nations called forth by their own sovereigns to assist themselves, took a part for the first time in their own

Its real causes.

affairs, and insensibly claimed from their governments for their internal liberty the privileges of thought, of speech, and of national will, which these governments had allowed them to exercise in defence of their external independence. They made use of, for their own protection and the administration of their own affairs, the immunities they had won in shedding their blood and squandering their treasures for their kings. They assumed in the national wars the attitude and the pride of free institutions. Moreover, the fall of Napoleon having broken the seal which for ten years had shut up the spirit of liberty in France, and given respiration to thought, to speech, to printing, and the tribune to the human mind, this accumulated explosion of liberty, which burst forth in France, produced an echo throughout all Europe, and this reflux of ideas, so long kept back, swept at once from Naples to Amsterdam, and from Moscow to Madrid. Ideas find their level in the moral world by a law analogous to that which governs the level of water, or of air, in the material. Invisible and interwoven roots connect together, by a certain real communion of thought and feeling, all altars, all thrones, all institutions, civil or religious, of nations apparently most unconnected by distance or manners; so that the fall, the concussion, or the modification of any of these things in any part of the globe, overturns, shocks, or modifies them inevitably everywhere. This is especially true with respect to France, a nation not superior to others, but more prompt, more active, and more sympathetic, which is first in thought and quickest in movement, and which the modern world loves to contemplate and imitate when it does not seek to humble or to conquer.

XIII.

Such were, in our estimation, the real causes of the intestine movements of emancipation, of liberty, and of imitation of constitutional governments, which agitated the continent, since the liberal institutions, the tribune, and the press of Paris began to excite the public mind, or to foment the secret factions of France. Napoleon and his armies had not accele-

The Spanish Revolution.

rated this movement of the minds of nations towards us, and this tendency to imitate us; they had, on the contrary, retarded it. The fear and hatred which conquest had excited against us throughout the world, were not attractions for its inhabitants; but the nations have turned towards us from the time when we ceased to be objects of their fear or hatred. They liked our ideas and our laws, but they could not bear our yoke.

In no part of the world had this yoke been more iniquitous, more odious, more offensive, and more heroically shaken off than in Spain. The laudable pride of independence had revived this slumbering nation under the stratagems and the violence of Napoleon. Spain was the Maccabeus of nations. Its history is known, and we shall not here recapitulate more of it than is indispensably necessary to connect the events of 1812 with those of 1821

XIV.

The house of Bourbon had reigned over Spain and its American possessions from the time of Louis XIV., or rather it had permitted the reign of its manners and customs, its monks and its inquisition, that permanent terror, which the fanaticism of a nation at that time ignorant, superstitious, and cruel, had suffered its priests to place by the side of and above its government. Amongst no people of the earth, since the time of the ancient Egyptians, or the Druidical Gauls, has the sacerdotal theocracy ever governed a nation so directly and so implacably. The perpetual purifying of the faith, and controlling the conscience by fire and sword, had multiplied its human sacrifices. Thirty-eight thousand victims of this tribunal, without appeal, had been publicly burned there during the last three centuries. The execution of heretics was annually presented there, as an edifying spectacle, or a fearful warning to the faithful. More than three hundred thousand others condemned, or merely suspected, and put to the torture, had expiated in the dungeons, the galleys, or other non-capital punishments, the crime of being only suspected of liberty of thought on sacred things. The mildness of the house of Bour-

Retrospective glance at Spain.

bon had softened by degrees the ferocity of Philip II. The inquisition obtained no more, or at least few victims under the last reign. But the immense and inviolable wealth of the church, the multiplication, the idleness, and the mendicancy of the monks, an institution which suppresses labour by precluding family, continued to embarrass the government and to beggar the country. It subsisted upon its pastoral productions and its distant colonies, like some idle proprietor who becomes weakened by sloth while his slaves cultivate for him the neglected soil. When the French revolution broke out in 1789, nothing remained to Spain but the chivalrous traditions of its nobility, the heroic blood of its people, kingdoms governed by viceroys in South America, an hereditary love of monarchy, and a superstition by turns timorous and fanatical for its priesthood; remnants of the virtues and vices of a nation in a state of decomposition, and which must become extinct unless re-generated by adversity

XV

Charles IV. reigned at this period, or rather allowed Godoy, his wife's minion, to reign in his name. Emanuel Godoy, a private in the King's guard, whose handsome person had captivated the young queen, and whose cleverness had relieved the King of the weight of the crown, exercised equally over both one of those mysterious and superhuman ascendancies, which can only be explained by the unbounded love of the wife, and the mental subjection of the husband. The King and the Queen seemed to possess only one heart to adore and aggrandise the common favourite; an expiation of despotism which subjects a nation to the will of one man, that man to a faithless woman, and that woman to an obscure courtier.

Godoy, who was subsequently Prince of the Peace, was neither incapable, ungrateful, nor a traitor. He had an apt capacity for public affairs, rational good sense for the necessary amelioration of the kingdom, and a gratitude and fidelity for his patrons, which partook of the superstition of the Spaniard, the assiduity of the lover, and the obedience of the son.

Emanuel Godoy.

Love and confidence had placed the kingdom in his hands, and he laboured to preserve it intact, prosperous, and faithful for his protectors. The clergy, whose domination over a monkish court he did not counteract, witnessed his favour without impatience, being apprehensive of a philosophical ministry chosen from the great Spanish lords, who began to disquiet their orthodoxy, and to breathe from beyond the Pyrenees the liberty of thought and of conscience. The nobility suffered him, by the habit of respecting in royal favourites, whether courtiers or cardinals, the caprices of majesty. The court, composed by him and the army of which he was commander-in-chief, were the servants of his will and his ambition. The heir of the crown alone, the young Ferdinand, married almost in his boyhood to a princess of Naples, hated in the Prince of the Peace, his mother's lover, his father's tyrant, the master and the rival of his own dignity, the humiliation of his family, and the natural enemy of the son of the royal house. The Princess of the Asturias, his wife, secluded, persecuted, and finally thrown into a decline and death by the cruel treatment of the Queen, together with some friends, the confidants of her misery, nourished an instinctive hatred of the favourite. Such was this court, in which religious ceremonies, surly etiquette, hunting, and music, kept up eternal ignorance and idle monotony.

XVI

The commotions in France, from 1789 to 1792, had been scarcely perceptible in Spain, where the inquisition, the police, the popular ignorance, the court indifference, and the broad barrier of the Pyrenees, intercepted everything. After a feeble declaration of war against the French Republic, through a decent resentment for shedding the blood of Louis XVI., the court of Spain had concluded a humiliating peace. It witnessed, trembling and motionless, the victories of Napoleon in Italy and Germany, and the dethronement of the house of Parma and the house of Naples, its relations; trusting to its fawning for its own preservation, lending its

His compliance to Napoleon.

fleet to the Emperor against England at Trafalgar, thus herself assisting in the subjugation of the sea and the continent, and lending a *corps d'armée* to Napoleon to coerce Denmark under his sway. This was not enough; the Prince of the Peace, the better to bind Napoleon by the tie of gratitude, concluded a secret treaty with him, by which he gave a free passage to the French troops to march to the subjugation of Portugal, and as a provision against the death of Charles IV., and his own loss of power, he had stipulated to obtain for himself, as a recompense for his complicity, the kingdom of the Algarves, a dismemberment of Portugal between him and Napoleon.

But no submission could satisfy Napoleon. He wanted another throne for one of his brothers, and from the centre of Germany had his eyes fixed upon Madrid. Secret negotiations, in which both sides were caressing, the better to deceive each other, existed in Paris between the private agents of the Emperor and the Prince of the Peace. It is not known what plots were hatching there to envelope Spain and win the favour of Napoleon, when a palace tragedy, resembling those of Byzantium under the Greek Empire, broke out unexpectedly at Aranjuez, the summer residence of the Spanish court, and furnished Napoleon with a pretext for the intervention, the craft, and the violence which he had been premeditating for some months past.

XVII.

The Prince of the Asturias, presumptive heir to the throne, who had recently lost his wife, worried to death by palace annoyances and the rigorous conduct of his mother, could no longer bear with patience the insolence and oppression of the favourite, whom he accused of ruining Spain, and conspiring against himself. In the paroxysm of his grief and terror, he had yielded to the instigations of his preceptor, a canon named Escoiquiz, and of two lords of his court, the Duke de San-Carlo and the Duke del Infantado, his confidants, who indicated to him, as his only support, the protecting and all-powerful intervention of Napoleon. The prince, driven to

Palace intrigues.

despair by the extremity of his danger and the excess of his hatred, wrote a letter to Napoleon, criminal in its object, and more criminal in its mystery, in which he supplicated the Emperor to adopt him as his son, and to give him the hand of a princess of the family of Bonaparte, or of Beauharnais.

Whether from intentional indiscretion on the part of Napoleon to render the breach between father and son irreconcilable, or whether through discovery of the minister's correspondence, the agent of the Prince of the Peace at Paris, Izquierdo became acquainted with the letter and denounced it to Godoy. Being communicated by the latter to the King and Queen, and interpreted into a state crime and conspiracy against the reign and the lives of his parents, this letter had raised to a pitch of delirium the grief, the pride, and the anger of the unfortunate Charles IV. The Queen, who hated her son in proportion to the passion she entertained for the favourite, had herself exaggerated the matter, and transformed an act of impropriety into a criminal attempt. The Prince of the Asturias, arrested in the palace of his father, conducted to the feet of the King and Queen, convicted of criminal correspondence with a foreign power, by criminatory documents found in his apartment, denounced to Spain and to the world as a rebellious prince, and an almost parricidal son, trembled under the reproaches and menaces of Godoy, and of the King and Queen. As cowardly in his repentance as he had been thoughtless in the crime, he humbled himself to tears, and debased himself in his examination to the extent of accusing his advisers. These advisers alone had suffered the vengeance of the laws, while the repentant son, degraded and pardoned, escaped the tragic fate of Don Carlos, and recovered in his father's court the liberty, the rank, and the subordination of a presumptive heir, removed from the Council board, and annulled by his humiliation. Europe had resounded with this drama without a catastrophe in the palace of Charles IV.; Spain, indignant at the debasement of its prince and the triumph of the favourite, became rife with murmurs and factions, which set the father against the son, the son against the mother, the Prince of the Peace

The French troops enter and occupy Madrid.

against the royal house, and the blood of its kings against the detested blood of the upstart of Badajoz

XVIII

This was the moment when Napoleon, under the ambiguous pretext of the affairs of Portugal, and an ill-defined co-operation of his army, lent to Spain in virtue of the secret treaty of Fontainebleau with Godoy, marched 100,000 of his best troops over the Pyrenees, commanded by Murat, possessed himself by violence or stratagem of the fortified places, and advanced upon Madrid, without either the terrified Spanish government, or himself, being able to give the Spanish patriots even a specious explanation of a military occupation of the kingdom; which placed, one after another, the provinces, the arsenals, the ports, the fortified towns, and speedily, perhaps, the capital itself, under the yoke and at the mercy of a foreign power. Charles IV., the Queen, and the favourite, their eyes being at length opened, but too late, to the projects of a conqueror who had concealed his ambition under the mask of friendship, determined to quit Madrid, to retire to Cadiz, and to transport themselves and the throne of Spain to America. The Spanish troops were already stationed on the route to Cadiz to protect the flight of the King and his family; but the prince of the Asturias secretly opposed this departure, which gave the monarchy to the French. This resistance of the heir presumptive transpired, and made him the idol of the humbled and betrayed nation. The court intimidated by the resolution of the people to oppose the flight of their sovereign, countermanded the intended departure, and retired with the favourite to Aranjuez, surrounded by the troops drawn together for their protection. During this indecision of the two parties of the court, and these still respectful movements of the people, Murat entered Madrid with the French army, occupied all the routes, and all the passages of the river which command the capital, and preserving an enigmatical silence, more alarming and more perfidious than a declaration of war, assumed the position of arbiter of the destiny of both king and people

XIX.

The Prince of the Peace, undeceived at length as to the pretended friendship of Napoleon, learned from his agent Izquierdo, who had suddenly arrived from Paris, that the usurpation of the throne and the nation was the secret of the mysterious manœuvres of Napoleon, and that there was no other salvation for himself and the royal family than a national insurrection, or flight. But this thoughtless favourite, accustomed to miracles of fortune, and intoxicated with the dreams which the crafty diplomacy of Napoleon had so long kept floating in his mind, was still slumbering at Aranjuez in the illusions and voluptuousness of boundless enjoyment. A clap of thunder awoke him on the night of the 17th of March 1808. A multitude of people issued furiously from Madrid at the moment Murat was entering it and profaning the capital with foreign arms, proceeded to the royal residence of Aranjuez, amidst cries of treason and of vengeance against the favourite, who, as they said, had sold and given up the country. This mob, increased on the route by the population of the villages and by the people of Aranjuez, rushed to the gates of Godoy's palace, gained over the troops, proclaimed the cherished name of the Prince of the Asturias, and burst into the chamber of the favourite, armed with daggers, to obliterate with his blood the Queen's passion, the King's weakness, and the ruin of the monarchy. Godoy had only time to escape by a lobby from the multitude who filled and destroyed his mansion, to ascend by a private staircase to the false roof of the palace, and to roll himself up, like one of the pretorian emperors of Rome, in a bundle of Indian cane mats, forsaken by his servants in the obscurity of an attic.

The crowd thinking he had escaped, plunged their thirsty weapons into his bed, ransacked his house, and lit their torches to burn it to ashes; then proceeding to the King's palace, they did not pass the threshold, but loading the Queen with invectives, and Charles IV. with expressions of pity, they loudly demanded to have Ferdinand their son for king, and

His concealment and discovery.

for the saviour of the Empire. Insensible to their danger and their personal insults, the Queen and her husband, more faithful to love and friendship than to their crown, had no alarm, no supplication, and no terrors but for Godoy. With clasped hands they conjured their son, now their master, to search for and save him, giving him up the Empire with pleasure, if he would only give them their friend

XX

The night, however, and a great part of the following day passed with the unfortunate Godoy in the slow agony of a condemned wretch who hears from his retreat the maledictions, the fury, the preparations for his destruction, and who cannot escape one description of death without throwing himself into another. Dying with thirst, destroyed with heat, burning with fever, trembling lest his palace should be set on fire, and he himself burned alive in the funeral pile of straw amidst which he was buried, he counted as ages the moments of his lengthened martyrdom. At length, no longer hearing the shouts of the multitude ringing through his dwelling, and thinking that the people, weary of seeking or waiting for him, had gone away to arch elsewhere, he ventured to descend from his retreat, gently down the backstairs that led to his garret, to slake his thirst; vainly looking for a drop of water in the courts and vaults of the palace, which only a few hours before had lavished upon him every delight. This silence in the apparently abandoned building was a snare; mute sentinels with naked feet, that they might not betray their watch, were posted in the vestibules. One of these perceived and seized him, rejected the offers of fortune with which the fugitive attempted to soften him, and gave him up to the guard, who vainly tried to save him from the fury, the mud, the stones, and the daggers, scarcely warded off, of the people. The news of his apprehension, flew like a cry of joy to the King's palace; the King and Queen responded by an exclamation of despair. They supplicated their son to show his magnanimity and rescue his enemy from death. "Ferdinand," said his mother to him,

Abdication of Charles IV.

"you wish for our crown, well then it is yours; save our friend, and your father will abdicate!" "Yes, yes," added the monarch, "save Emanuel and you are King!" At these words Ferdinand rushed forward to the assistance of his persecutor, snatched him from the multitude, and put him under the protection of the troops. "Learn," he exclaimed as his only act of vengeance, "learn that I am now your King!" "Are the King my master and the Queen still alive?" was the only consolation demanded by the favourite, more attentive to the destiny of his benefactors than to his own wounds and humiliations. Being satisfied of their existence, he was thrown, covered with blood and dirt, into a carriage, and conducted to the castle of Villa Viciosa, to await another death. The sport of favour, of fortune, of disgrace, and of death, which all contended for their victim in one night, and had not yet done with him

XXI.

Charles IV. abdicated on the same day in favour of Ferdinand, both waiting till the act should be ratified by Napoleon, master of the territory by means of his army, and by his policy arbiter of the crown. His interpreter, Murat, refused to explain himself, impressing with hope and fear, by turns, both father and son. Napoleon, preceded and followed by invincible forces, arrived at Bayonne, the last French city on the Spanish frontier, and summoned this great cause before him upon the French soil, as if to hold the competitors, both of whom he intended to dethrone, at the mercy of his ambition and separated from their subjects. Charles IV., his wife, his son, and the favourite, allowed themselves to be drawn thither one after the other, partly by seduction and partly by force. The stratagems which brought these monarchs to Bayonne, rather recalled the Italian policy of Machiavel than the Roman policy of Caesar. Napoleon having dragged these princes to his feet, resolved to dishonour them by means of one another, by offering to the world the spectacle of their quarrels and their debasement. Both father and mother overwhelmed the son, in the presence of Napoleon, with imprecations as a parricide.



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